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SIDNEY LANIER

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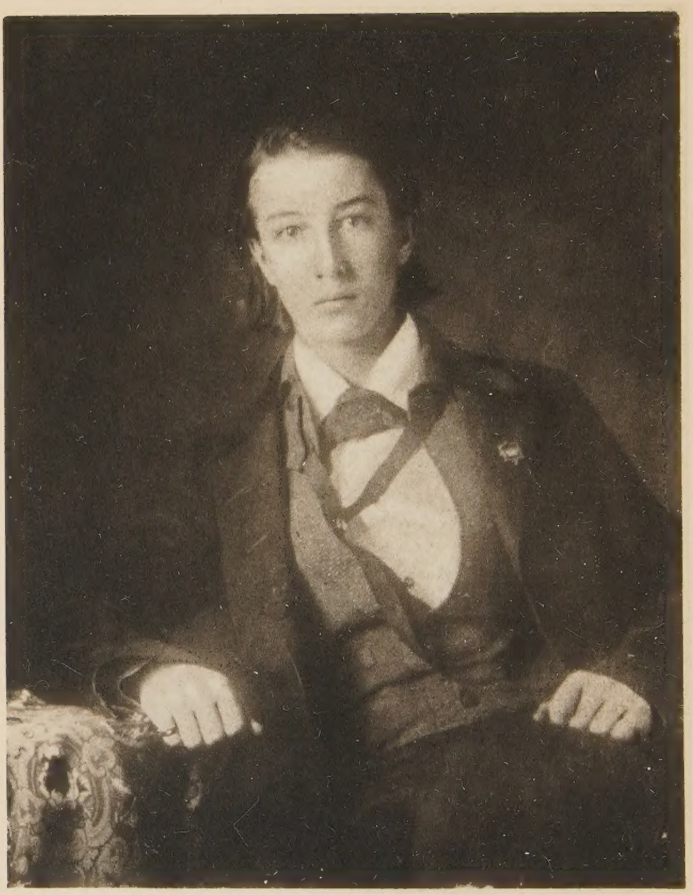
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LETTERS OF SIDNEY LANIER

Selections from His Correspondence
1866–1881

WITH PORTRAITS

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1916

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By Mary Day Lanier



A POEM-OUTLINE

BY

SIDNEY LANIER

Are ye so sharp set for the centre of the earth, are ye so hungry for the centre of things,
O rains and springs and rivers of the mountains?
Towards the centre of the earth, towards the very Middle of things, ye will fall, ye will run, the Centre will draw ye, Gravity will drive you and draw you in one:
But the Centre ye will not reach, ye will come as near as the plains, — watering them in coming so near, — and ye will come as near as the bottom of the Ocean, seeing and working many marvels as ye come so near:
But the Centre of Things ye will not reach,
O my rivers and rains and springs of the mountains.
Provision is made that ye shall not: ye would be merged, ye could not return.
Nor shall my soul be merged in God, though tending, though tending.

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Prefatory Note

It may be assumed even within the brief formality of an introductory note that Sidney Lanier was a rare good writer of letters. Whereas a volume of poems, say, may bring forth the extremes of condemnation and approval from esthetical judges possessing, apparently, an equally high critical equipment, the gift of letter-writing, curious and capricious as it often is, becomes manifest to readers at large in a paragraph, a sentence, a glance. The philosopher, the poet, the novelist, the great journalist may be hopelessly dull in these private compositions, unmeant for publication; and every one has known some alert, gossippy old lady, seemingly with genius only for pastry crust, and obviously with no mental pabulum above the Sunday newspapers, whose letters were delightful.

The most important object of this volume is, doubtless, to give the poet's audience a clearer and closer glimpse of Lanier the man, and to show how nearly synonymous with him was Lanier the poet and musician. The letters have no comprehensive range to aid in this endeavor, but they have this lively and intimate style which serves

at once to picture the poet-writer with strength, if with haste, and to give an intrinsically entertaining quality to the volume.

In Sidney Lanier's case several things combined to insure the presence of this human interest in his letter-writing. His mind was almost preternaturally alert, his sympathies ready and keen, his gift of expression facile and naïvely daring. Picture such a young man of genius, confident of his genius, coming fresh from the provinces to hear, for the first time, Wagner and Theodore Thomas, — to meet, for the first time, the men whose God was his God. There was not a sophisticated fibre in his being to cheapen the joy of the new sensations, as he wrote of them, exuberantly, to his wife and his friends. It reminds one of what Thackeray said of Clive Newcome, that a mere glass of claret seemed to give that young man more pleasure than other people could get out of it.

It is as well to remind readers of this, that Lanier was writing from the standpoint of the artist who is suddenly transferred from a region desert of art, in which he has been groping and struggling throughout his life, to his country's centre of music and letters. It explains a degree of ecstasy which to a casual reader might seem inexplicable, and it adds a distinct pleasure to the reading; every one knows the delight of sharing with a companion of sensibility his first occasion of great dramatic or musical art, and the pleasure

is not less when the companion is a poet and musician.

The letters have been selected from Mr. Lanier's correspondence in the period between 1866 and 1881. They are not grouped chronologically, because neither their content nor their editing is formally biographical. Of the four groups, one is composed of letters on musical topics written to the poet's wife, and the remainder are the results of three literary friendships. Most of the letters have been printed before, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Scribner's Magazine*, *The Critic*, and the *Life and Letters of Bayard Taylor*. The selection and the editing of the letters * are the work of Mr. Henry Wysham Lanier, the poet's son, who has had the assistance and co-öperation of his mother, Mrs. Sidney Lanier. The collection was made possible by the kindness of Mrs. Bayard Taylor, Mr. Will H. Hayne, and Mr. William R. Thayer; and the introduction to the group of letters to Mr. Gibson Peacock is from Mr. Thayer's pen, being a selection from the fuller context given in 1894, in the *Atlantic Monthly*. The introductory paragraphs also in the letters to Paul Hayne were from the pen of that poet.

C. D. L.

* As was true of the preceding volumes, *Music and Poetry* and *Retrospects and Prospects*.

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Letters to Mr. Gibson Peacock

Letters of Sidney Lanier

Letters to Mr. Gibson Peacock

INTRODUCTION

BY WILLIAM R. THAYER

I

Sidney Lanier was born in Macon, Ga., February 3, 1842. The Laniers were French Huguenots, who took refuge in England in Elizabeth's time, and attained, at her court and that of the Stuarts, to distinction in music and painting. The founder of the American branch came to Richmond, Va., in 1716. Lanier's mother, Mary Anderson, was of Scotch descent. So far as heredity counted, therefore, he had behind him, on both sides, pious ancestors, and it may not be too fanciful to suppose that he drew from those far-off, art-loving Huguenot forerunners the beginnings of his own exquisite sensibility to art. Of this sensibility he early showed signs, music especially having a wonderful power over him. At fourteen he entered Oglethorpe College, where he got such education as was to be obtained at a small Southern seminary before the Rebellion. Graduating with highest honors in 1860, he accepted a tutorship, but in the following year, at the outbreak of the war, he enlisted in the first regiment of Georgia Volunteers, and served till 1864, when, being in command of a blockade runner, he was taken pris-

oner and confined at Point Lookout. In February, 1865, he was exchanged, and, travelling most of the distance on foot, made his way back to Macon, where he broke down with the first serious premonitions of consumption. The exposures in the army, the rigor of his imprisonment, — he had begun the winter months at Point Lookout with only summer clothes to wear, — had weakened his constitution, and a tendency to consumption, inherited from his mother, warned him thus early that to live he must struggle.

Upon his recovery he was employed as a clerk at Montgomery, Ala., and in 1867 he published, in New York, "Tiger Lilies," a novel into which he wove some of his war experiences, and which better deserves to be unearthed than do many of the firstfruits of genius. That same year he married Miss Mary Day, of Macon. Thenceforth, through all his wanderings he was blessed with the companionship of one who firmly believed in his powers, and who cheered alike his years of disappointment and of illness. Doubly precarious was his existence: his ill-health prevented him from pursuing any occupation long, and his straitened means forced him to accept uncongenial employments, if only he might thereby earn bread. We find him teaching school at Prattville, Ala., and then for several years, at his father's urgent request, practising law at Macon, till in 1872 the condition of his lungs drove him to San Antonio, Texas, in search of a climate in which he might safely live. In the following spring, however, he returned to Georgia, and in December, 1873, he went to Baltimore, where he was engaged to play the first flute in the Peabody Orchestra.

These are but the externals of his early life: to know

how, amid such vicissitudes, his genius had developed we should need to have recourse to his diary and letters to his family, and to other material that will some day be the basis of an adequate biography. But we know already enough to say that his flowering as a poet was neither sudden nor casual. From his youth up, Music and Poetry had been equally his mistresses, and for a long time there was doubt as to which would predominate. As a boy, he could play almost any instrument, and it is recorded how, after improvising on the violin, he would be rapt into an ecstasy which left his whole frame trembling with the exhaustion of too tense delight. In the army, his flute had been his constant companion, and it had endeared him to his captors at Point Lookout. Yet all this while he had felt the growing compulsion of poetry within him; he had planned a drama, and occasionally written verses. Neither sickness nor drudgery could long turn him from the deepest craving of his spirit. Conscious of his powers, he yet had, what is perhaps the rarest talent in men of his temperament, the talent of waiting. The mission of poet, as he conceived it, transcends all others; he knew that the innate poetic faculty would not suffice for its fulfilment unless it were reinforced by character and by knowledge. So he refrained from miniature utterance. "Day by day," he wrote to his wife in February, 1870, "from my snow and my sunshine, a thousand vital elements rill through my soul. Day by day, the secret deep forces gather, which will presently display themselves in bending leaf and waxy petal, and in useful fruit and grain." Again, from Texas, he wrote: "All day my soul hath been cutting swiftly into the great space of the subtle, unspeakable

deep, driven by wind after wind of heavenly melody. The very inner spirit and essence of all wind-songs, bird-songs, passion-songs, folk-songs, country-songs, sex-songs, soul-songs, and body-songs hath blown upon me in quick gusts like the breath of passion, and sailed me into a sea of vast dreams, whereof each wave is at once a vision and a melody."

Conscious of his powers, therefore, he had nevertheless patience to await their ripening. Feeling that the highest mission had been entrusted to him, he seems to have said to himself, like Milton: "I was confirmed in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honorablest things; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and practice of all that which is praiseworthy."

To break away from the law against his father's advice, and to seek support from his art among strangers, required resolution which only his loyalty to art could justify. In Baltimore his flute brought him a bare maintenance, and left him leisure for study and for poetry. He felt that the time had come when he might open his lips. A long poem, "Corn," took shape, and he hoped to find in New York an editor who would publish it; but a visit to that city only served to teach him the "wooden-headedness" of many persons who were leaders there in literary matters. Yet he was not discouraged, nor did the rebuff sour him. "I remember," he writes, "that it has always been so; that the new man has always to work his way over these Alps of stupidity, much as that ancient general

crossed the actual Alps, splitting the rocks with vinegar and fire, — that is, by bitterness and suffering. D. V., I will split them. . . . The more I am thrown against these people here, and the more reverses I suffer at their hands, the more confident I am of beating them finally. I do not mean, by 'beating,' that I am in opposition to them, or that I hate them, or feel aggrieved with them; no, they know no better, and they act up to their light with wonderful energy and consistency. I only mean that I am sure of being able, some day, to teach them better things and nobler modes of thought and conduct."

A few months later, in "Lippincott's Magazine" for February, 1875, "Corn" was published. Read after twenty years have proved its staying powers, we do not wonder that here and there a discerning reader at once recognized the merits of that poem; for in it we plainly see Lanier's credentials from the Muse. Nevertheless, recognition came slowly, but it came from persons whose opinion confirmed his unflinching yet unpresumptuous belief in his poetic mission. First among these was Mr. Gibson Peacock, the friend to whom the following series of letters was written. Mr. Peacock was the editor of the Philadelphia "Evening Bulletin," a newspaper in which, under his direction, literary and artistic matters were treated seriously at a time when it was rare for Philadelphia journals so to treat them. In these days he would be called an editor of the old school, since he had had a college education, had read widely the best English literature, was familiar with the modern languages, had travelled far in this country and in Europe, and had cultivated himself not less in music and in dramatic criticism than in books. Having

read "Corn" in "Lippincott's," he wrote an enthusiastic notice of it in the "Evening Bulletin;" and this notice speedily brought him a letter from Lanier, the first in this collection, and ere many weeks they met. From their meeting ripened a friendship strong and honorable on both sides, as these letters will show. Though Mr. Peacock was a man of extreme reserve, and the elder by twenty years, yet neither age nor reserve hindered his affectionate interest from manifesting itself to Lanier, who, in turn, rejoiced at finding a friend who was also competent to criticise and to suggest.

Through Mr. Peacock, Lanier became acquainted with Charlotte Cushman, with Bayard Taylor, and with many another of the appreciators of art and literature who in those days frequented the little parlors in Walnut Street. How inspiring and helpful this intercourse was to Lanier we may guess when we remember that until now, though past thirty, he had been seeking health and a livelihood in places which, stricken by the havoc of conquest, had little time or means for culture. Amid hostile conditions he had cherished his Ideal, and now he found, what every genuine soul craves, friendship and appreciation. There was no danger of his becoming spoiled; the sympathy he received was far removed from flattery. To Miss Cushman he was especially drawn, — as were all who had the privilege of knowing well that generous and brave spirit, — and to Mrs. Peacock, whose voice of wonderful range and beauty, and whose sympathetic nature, made her doubly attractive to him. He could now feel that though fame still lingered, and though the daily struggle for existence must be met, there was a little circle of

friends whose commendation he could trust, and upon whose affection, liberal and sincere, he could at all times rely. At the Peacocks' he more than once found shelter in distress. There, during the Centennial year, he was tenderly nursed through an illness which brought him very near the grave; there, his visits were always welcome.

Lanier's letters to Mr. Peacock tell so fully his plans and wanderings between 1875 and 1880 that it is unnecessary to add biographic details here. During those years there was no other correspondent to whom he so freely wrote out of his heart. These letters not only admit us into the fellowship of a poet, but they also disclose to us a man whose life was, in Milton's phrase, "a true poem." Here is nothing to extenuate, nothing to blot: the poet and the man are one. My purpose in editing has, accordingly, been to retain whatever reveals aught, however slight, of the man, in order that the portrait of Lanier's personality, unconsciously drawn by himself, should be as complete as possible; and whatever does not refer to this will at least illustrate the conditions by which an embodied Ideal, a Poet, so recently found himself beset in this world of ours. I know not where to look for a series of letters which, in bulk equally small, relate so humanly and beautifully the story of so precious a life.

64 Centre Street, Baltimore, Md.,
January 26, 1875.

My dear Sir: A very lovely friend of mine — Mrs. F. W. — has been so gracious as to transmit to me, through my wife, your first comments on my poem "Corn," in "Lippincott's," which I had not seen before.

The slip appears to be cut from the "Bulletin" of 16th or 17th.

I cannot resist the impulse which urges me to send you my grateful acknowledgments of the poetic insight, the heartiness and the boldness which display themselves in this *critique*. I thank you for it, as for a poet's criticism upon a poet.

Permit me to say that I am particularly touched by the courageous independence of your review. In the very short time that I have been in the hands of the critics, nothing has amazed me more than the timid solicitudes with which they rarefy in one line any enthusiasm they may have condensed in another — a process curiously analogous to those irregular condensations and rarefactions of air which physicists have shown to be the conditions for producing an indeterminate sound. Many of my critics have seemed — if I may change the figure — to be forever conciliating the yet-unrisen ghosts of possible mistakes. From these you separate yourself *toto cælo;* and I am thoroughly sure that your method is not only far more worthy the dignity of the critical office, but also far more helpful to the young artist, by its bold sweeping-away of those sorrowful uncertain mists that arise at times out of the waste bitterness of poverty and obscurity.

— Perhaps here is more feeling than is quite delicate in a communication to one not an old personal friend: but I do not hesitate upon propriety, if only I may convey to you some idea of the admiration with which I regard your manly position in my behalf, and of the earnestness with which I shall always consider myself

Your obliged and faithful friend,

SIDNEY LANIER.

March 2, 1875.

DEAR MR. PEACOCK: I write a line to say that business will probably call me to Philadelphia in a day or two, and that I particularly desire to go with you and Mrs. Peacock to Theodore Thomas' Symphony Concert on Friday night. If you have no other engagement for that evening, pray set it apart graciously for me, who am already tingling with the anticipated double delight of *your*selves and of music.

Many thanks for the "Bulletin" containing the Sonnet. I am gratified that you should have thought the little poem worth republishing. I have not now time to say more than that I am always

Your friend, SIDNEY LANIER.

March 24, 1875.

A thousand thanks for your kind and very thoughtful letter. I should have gone to Philadelphia in acceptance of your invitation to meet Miss Cushman, — although much tied by engagements here, and in ill condition of health to go anywhere, — had I not expected to meet her here in April. Your announcement of her illness gives me sincere concern, and I will be thankful to you if you will keep me posted as to her progress in recovery. I wrote her a short time ago, to care of her bankers in New York: but fear she has been too ill to read my letter.

I have the delightful anticipation of seeing you again, for a day or two, ere long: but cannot tell whether it will be in two or three weeks. My plans depend on the movements of others; and as soon as they become more definite you shall know them.

Pray tell your good Mrs. Peacock that I am much

better, and, though in daily fight against severe pain, am hard at work. About four days ago, a certain poem which I had vaguely ruminated for a week before took hold of me like a real James River ague, and I have been in a mortal shake with the same, day and night, ever since. I call it "The Symphony:" I personify each instrument in the orchestra, and make them discuss various deep social questions of the times, in the progress of the music. It is now nearly finished; and I shall be rejoiced thereat, for it verily racks all the bones of my spirit.

Did you see Mr. [Bayard] Taylor? Tell me about him. I cannot tell you with what eagerness I devoured "Felix Holt." For perfect force-in-repose, Miss Evans (or, I should have said, Mrs. Lewes) is not excelled by any writer.

Pray convey my warm regards to Mrs. Peacock, and keep that big, heartsome "Max Adeler"[1] in remembrance of his and

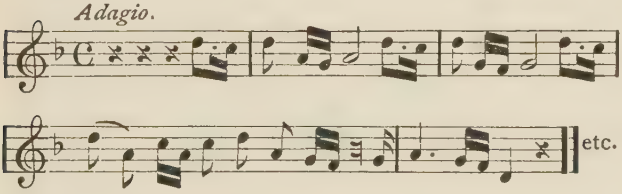
Your friend, SIDNEY LANIER.

BRUNSWICK, GA., *April* 18, 1875.

MY DEAR MRS. PEACOCK: Such a three days' *dolce far niente* as I'm having! With a plenty of love, — wife's, bairns', and brother's, — and no end of trees and vines, what more should a work-battered man desire, in this divine atmosphere which seems like a great sigh of pleasure from some immense Lotos in the vague South? The little house, by one of whose windows I am writing, stands in one corner of an open square which is sur-

[1] The pseudonym of Charles Heber Clark, at that time an editor of the Philadelphia "Evening Bulletin," and the author of "Out of the Hurly-Burly," "Elbow Room," and other humorous works.

rounded by an unbroken forest of oaks, of all manner of clambering and twining things, and of pines, — not the dark, gloomy pines of the Pennsylvania mountains, but tall masses of vivid emerald all in a glitter with the more brilliant green of the young buds and cones; the sun is shining with a hazy and absent-minded face, as if he were thinking of some quite other star than this poor earth; occasionally a little wind comes along, not warm, but unspeakably bland, bringing strange scents rather of leaves than of flowers; the mocking-birds are all singing, but singing *sotto voce*, and a distant cock crows as if he did n't *mean* to crow, but only to yawn luxuriously; an old mauma over in the neighborhood is singing, as she sets about washing in her deliberate way, something like this: —



persistently rejecting all the semitones of the D minor in which she is singing (as I have observed all the barbaric music does, as far as it can), and substituting the stronger C♮ for the C♯; and now my little four-year-old comes in from feeding the pony and the goat, and writhes into my lap, and inquires with great interest, "Papa, can you whistle *backwards?*" by which I find, after a puzzled inquiry, that he means to ask if I can whistle by drawing my breath *in*, instead of forcing it *out*, — an art in which he proceeds to instruct me with a great show of superiority: and now he leaves, and the

whole world is still again, except the bird's lazy song and old mauma's monotonous crooning.

I am convinced that God meant this land for people to rest in, — not to work in. If we were so constituted that life *could* be an idyll, then this were the place of places for it; but being, as it is, the hottest of all battles, a man might as well expect to plan a campaign in a dream as to make anything like his best fight here. . . .

Pray write me how Miss Cushman seemed on the morning after the reading. She was so exhausted when I helped her from the carriage that I fear her strength must have been severely taxed. My address for a month hence will be at Jacksonville, Fla.: I leave for that place on Wednesday (day after to-morrow), and shall make it headquarters during all my ramblings around the flowery State.

These lonesome journeys — which are the necessities of my unsettled existence — make me doubly grateful for the delightful recollections which form my companions along the tiresome miles, and for which I am indebted to you. Believe, my dear Mrs. Peacock, that they are always with me, and that I am always your and Mr. Peacock's

Sincere friend, SIDNEY LANIER.

BRUNSWICK, GA., *June* 16, 1875.

I am just stopping here a day, after the woods of Florida. I have all your letters. Out of what a liberal sky do you rain your gracious encouragements upon me! In truth, dear friend, there is such large sweep and swing in this shower-after-shower of your friendliness, it comes in such big rhythms of generosities, it is such a poem of inner rains, that I cannot at all get myself satisfied to

meet it with anything less than that perfect rose of a song which should be the product of such watering. I think I hear one of these growing now down in my soul yonder, somewhere: presently the green calyx of silence shall split, . . . and you shall see your flower.

Your notice of "The Symphony" [1] has given a great deal of pleasure to my family as well as to me. It has been extensively copied in the Southern papers, and adopted by editors as expressing their views of the poem.

Mr. [Bayard] Taylor's letter brings me a noble prospect of realizing an old dream. I had always a longing after him, but I have never dared indulge it more than one indulges what one considers only a pet possibility; so that now when I behold this mere shadow of a meeting assume the shape of an actual hand-shaking in the near future, it is as when a man wakes in the morning and finds his Dream standing by his bed.

After August, when my present engagement will terminate, my motions will entirely depend on whatever income-bringing work I may succeed in finding. Within three weeks from this time, I will however be *en route* to New York, and you must write me as soon as you receive this — addressing me at Macon, Ga. — your programme for that time, if you're going to be out of Philadelphia. I shall look you up *ubicunque in Angliâ*, wherever you may be.

May I beg that you will cause Mr. Taylor to address me to your own care, or, if you are to leave town before I get there, to care of the "Bulletin"? I will write my own plans more definitely in a few days.

[1] "The Symphony" was published in "Lippincott's Magazine," June, 1875.

Pray accept this photograph.[1] Of course you will see that, instead of being an *average* of my phiz, it is the best possible single view thereof, and is for that reason much better looking than I am, but it will serve to remind you and my dear Mrs. Peacock of

Your friend, SIDNEY L.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., *July* 31, 1875.

If you have ever watched a shuttle, my dear friend, being violently knocked backward and forward in a loom, never settled for an instant at this end before it is rudely smacked back to the other, you will possess a very fair idea of the nature of my recent travels. I do not know how many times I have been from North to South in the last six weeks; the negotiations about the Florida book and the collection of additional material for it have required my presence at widely separated points often; and as my employer is himself always on the wing, I have sometimes had to make a long chase in order to come up with him. I believe my wanderings are now ended, however, for a time, and as the very first of the many blessings which this cessation of travel will bring to a tired soul, I count the opportunity to send a line which will carry my love to you and to your *other* you.

Lippincott has made what seems to be a very fair proposition to print the Florida book, taking an interest in it which I think practically amounts to about one half. I am going to add to it, by way of appendix, a complete Guide-book to Florida; and as this feature ought of itself to secure some sale among the fifteen or twenty thousand annual visitors, I am induced to hope that my employer

[1] The photograph is reproduced in the volume of Lanier's poems published by Charles Scribner's Sons in 1884.

may be reimbursed for his entire outlay, — though I keep in mind what they all tell me, that the publication of any book is a mere lottery, and baffles all prophecy as to its success. Two chapters of the book, one on "St. Augustine" in April, and one on "The Oclawaha River," are to appear in the Magazine, October and November numbers.

I will probably leave here to-day, and my address for a month hence will be 195 Dean St., Brooklyn. Your package of letters was handed me duly at the "Bulletin" office. I was ready to murder somebody, for pure vexation, when I learned there that I had just missed you by about two hours; it would have been *such* a comfort to have seen your two faces before you left.

Many thanks for Mr. Taylor's letter. I do hope I may be able to see him during the next month. Do you think a letter from me would reach him at Mattapoisett? For his estimate of my Symphony seems to me so full and generous that I think I will not resist the temptation to anticipate his letter to me. I will write also to Mr. Calvert to-morrow; his insight into a poet's internal working, as developed in his kind notice of me in the "Golden Age," is at once wonderful and delightful.

The next number of "Lippincott's" will contain four sonnets of mine in the Shakespearian metre. I sincerely hope they are going to please you. You will be glad to know that "The Symphony" meets with continuing favor in various parts of the land.

My month in Brooklyn will be full of the very hardest work. I will be employed in finishing and revising the Florida book, many of the points in which demand very careful examination. In August my railroad employment terminates.

My friend Miss Stebbins has sent me a letter of introduction to her brother, who is chairman of the Board of Trustees of the new College of Music in New York. I am going to see if they will found a chair of the Physics of Music and give it me. I can scarcely describe to you how lovely my life would seem if I could devote the balance of it to such lectures as would properly belong to a professorship of this nature, and to my poetry.

— So, now, you know all about me: tell me how you and Mrs. Peacock fare through the summer. What is Cushing's Island?[1] A small one, broken, with water dashing up all around you, and a clean, sweet wind airing your very souls? I wish it might be, for your sakes, and I hope you are both getting strong and elastic. Write me straightway all about yourselves. I beg that each of you will deliver a loving message for me to the other: and that you will both hold me always as

Your faithful friend, SIDNEY LANIER.

195 DEAN STREET, BROOKLYN, N. Y.,
August 10, 1875.

Your letter of the 8th, enclosing McClellan's, reached me a few moments ago. Accept my thanks for both.

Your syren-song of the beauties of your Island is at once tempting and tantalizing. When you say you "think I would be tempted to come, if I could imagine the enchanting views from this house," you make me think of that French empress who *wondered how the stupid canaille could be so obstinate as to starve when such delicious pâtés could be bought for only five francs apiece.* Cushing's Island, my dear friend, is as impossible to me, in the present state of the poetry-market, as a dinner at

[1] A resort in the harbor of Portland, Me.

Very's was to a *chiffonnier:* all of which I would n't tell you, both because it is personal and because poverty is not a pleasant thing to think about at Cushing's Island, except for the single controlling reason that I cannot bear your thinking that I *could* come to you, if I would.

— And all of which you are to forget as soon as you have taken in the whole prodigious conclusiveness of it, and only remember so far as to consider yourselves charged to breathe enough sea-air (heavens, how I long for it!) for all three of us; as Arsène Houssaye's friend with the big appetite said, on sitting down and finding that the gentleman who had been invited to dine with him was unavoidably absent, "Well, I will eat for us both," and then proceeded actually to do it, helping himself twice at each course.

I will probably see you, though, in Philadelphia when you come; and that is some consolation.

BROOKLYN, *September* 9, 1875.

Will you be in Philadelphia about the 13th or 14th next? Business calls me there at that time; and I wish to know if I 'm going to have the pleasure of seeing you. I can only scrawl a line. My work has been rudely interrupted by a series of troublesome hæmorrhages, which have for some time prevented me from reading or speaking, as well as from writing. I 'm crawling back into life, however, and hope to be at work in a few days.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., *September* 24, 1875.

How bright you made my little visit to Philadelphia, — a sort of asteroid to circle round my dark. But I have n't more than just time now to thank you for the letter and papers which you forwarded, and to

tell you to address me henceforth at the Westminster Hotel, New York City, where I go presently, being now in the bitter agonies of moving, packing and the like dreadful bores. A letter from Miss Stebbins informs me that they are all safely at Lenox and our dear Miss Cushman improving. One can entrust one's message to a blue sky like this morning's; consider this lovely day to be the salutation of

Your friend, SIDNEY L.

PARKER HOUSE, BOSTON, MASS.,
November 4, 1875.

On arriving here at six o'clock in the morning, half frozen and very sleepy, I found a pleasant room with a glowing fire ready for me, and so tumbled into bed for another snooze before the world should rise. About nine I rose again; and while I was *in puris naturalibus* — 'midst of the very crisis and perilous climax of ablution — came a vivacious tap at my door; I opened the same, with many precautions: and behold, my eyes — which were all in lather, what time my beard was in strings that shed streams around my path, and, as it were, "writ my name in water" wherever I walked — rested on the bright face of my good Charlotte Cushman shining with sweetness and welcome.

I had expected to find her all propped up in pillows; and was therefore amazed to see how elastic was her step, and how strong and bright she is in all particulars. She sleeps "beautifully" (she says), and as we meet at the breakfast table each morning she is fairly overflowing with all manner of bright and witty and tender sayings, although in the midst of them she rubs the poor swollen arm that gives so much trouble.

Altogether, there can be no question as to her temporary benefit, nor as to the permanent gain resulting from the good digestion, the healthy appetite, the sound sleep, and the control of pain which her physician has secured for her. I believe that she is at least half-convinced that he is going to cure her; he tells her so, continually, and does not seem to entertain the shadow of a doubt of it. I have seen him twice for a few moments; and can say that he interests me very much, because his theory — which he makes no concealment of whatever — is, as far as he has been able in our very short talks to expound it to me, at least new, bold, and radical, while I do not perceive that he gives any sign of being a *mere* charlatan. I heard last night, at the Wednesday Night Club (where Mr. Coolidge was kind enough to invite me), all sorts of stories about him, many of which I do not doubt to be true. So that, on the whole, I am still waiting a little for the drawing-out which I intend to bring to bear on him, before I allow myself to make a final judgment about him. Meantime there can be no question of Miss Cushman's genuine improvement; and her intercourse with the young physician seems to have been very satisfactory to her.

I have not yet written a line of my India papers; and am going at it this morning, tooth and nail. Will you take the trouble to ask the Librarian of the Phila^{d} Library if I may keep the two books I have, for a couple of days longer? If he refuses, I will ask you to telegraph me, so that I may get them back in time.

Mr. Taylor, whom I saw for a few moments in New York, asked after you both very particularly: Miss Cushman is now secluded with the physician, else I

am sure she would send messages to you. As for me, dear friend, my thoughts go to you as thickly as these snowflakes which are now falling outside my window, and — alas, as silently, for lack of expression. But I feel sure that you know I am always

Your friend, S. L.

BOSTON, *November* 10, 1875.

I scrawl a hasty note, just as I am leaving, to beg that you will hand the two books which I have to-day sent you *by express* to the Librarian, with my thanks for his kind permission to keep them over the time. They were very useful to me.

Our friend Miss Cushman is suffering a good deal of pain every day, but appears to keep up her general health steadily. I 've had several talks with her doctor, — and I would not be surprised if he really cured her. I find him not at all a quack, at least not an ignorant one; he is quite up to the most advanced ideas in his profession.

But I have not time now to say more. I go directly to Macon, except one day in New York, and will be at home for two weeks, then to Baltimore for the winter, to resume my old place as first flute in the Orchestra.

God bless you both, says your friend,

S. L.

66 CENTRE STREET, BALTIMORE, MD.,
December 16, 1875.

Yours enclosing three dollars came to me safely; and I should have immediately acknowledged it, had I not been over head (literally) and ears in a second installment of my India papers for which the magazine was

agonizedly waiting. Possibly you may have seen the January number by this time; and it just occurs to me that if you should read the India article you will be wondering at my talking coolly of strolling about Bombay with a Hindu friend. But Bhima Gandharva (*Bhima* was the name of the ancient Sanscrit hero *The Son of the Air*, and *Gandharva* means *A Heavenly Musician*) is only another name for *Imagination* — which is certainly the only Hindu friend I have; and the propriety of the term, as well as the true character of Bhima Gandharva and the insubstantial nature of all adventures recorded as happening to him and myself, is to be fully explained in the end of the last article. I hit upon this expedient, after much tribulation and meditation, in order at once to be able to make something like a narrative that should avoid an arid encyclopedic treatment, and to be perfectly truthful. The only plan was to make it a pure *jeu d'esprit;* and in writing the second paper I have found it of great advantage.

I have n't heard a word of the Florida book beyond what you sent me; — God have mercy upon its soul, — I suppose it will be (as the judge says when the black cap is on) hanged by the neck until it is dead, dead, dead.

I have with me my Charley, *ætat.* seven, the sweetest, openest, honestest little man was ever built. I find him splendid company; and I wish you might see him at this moment, with his long lashes fringing the full oval eyes, profoundly slumbering in bed, where I have but ten minutes ago tucked him in and kissed him good-night.

I have a charming letter from C. C. [Charlotte Cush-

man], but through all the fair things she says to me I can detect the note of physical pain, and the poor sweet soul is evidently suffering greatly.

It does not now look like I shall be able to see you, as I had hoped at Xmas. I wish I had some method of telling you with what deep satisfaction I reflect upon you both, and with what delight I would find myself able to be to you, in some fair act as well as in all fair words,

Your faithful friend, S. L.

66 Centre Street, Baltimore, Md.,
January 18, 1876.

For several weeks past all my minutes have been the property of others, and I have in vain tried to appropriate a little one to you.

The enclosed [1] will show you partly what I have been doing. I am not at liberty to mention the matter; but you will keep it until the interdict against publicity is removed. The Centennial Commission has invited me to write a poem which shall serve as the text for a Cantata (the music to be by Dudley Buck, of New York) to be sung at the opening of the Exhibition, under Thomas' direction. All this is to be kept secret.

I 've written the enclosed. Necessarily I had to think out the musical conceptions as well as the poem, and I have briefly indicated these along the margin of each movement. I have tried to make the whole as simple and as candid as a melody of Beethoven's; at the same time expressing the largest ideas possible, and expressing them in such a way as could not be offensive to any

[1] First draught of the Cantata, to be sung at the opening of the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia. Portions of this and the following letter were printed as an appendix to the Poems, 1884.

modern soul. I particularly hope you 'll like the Angel's Song, where I have endeavored to convey, in one line each, the philosophies of Art, of Science, of Power, of Government, of Faith, and of Social Life. Of course, I shall not expect that this will instantly appeal to tastes peppered and salted by Swinburne and that ilk; but one cannot forget Beethoven, and somehow all my inspirations came in these large and artless forms, in simple Saxon words, in unpretentious and purely intellectual conceptions; while nevertheless I felt, all through, the necessity of making a genuine song — and not a rhymed set of good adages — out of it. I adopted the trochees of the first movement because they *compel* a measured, sober, and meditative movement of the mind; and because, too, they are not the genius of our language. When the trochees cease, and the land emerges as a distinct unity, then I fall into our native iambics.

I am very anxious you should think it worthy. If your Maria shall like it, I shall not feel any fear about it.

BALTIMORE, *January* 25, 1876.

Your praise and your wife's give me a world of comfort. I really do not believe anything was ever written under an equal number of limitations; and when I first came to know all the conditions of the poem, I was for a moment inclined to think that no genuine work could be produced under them. As for the friend who was the cause of the compliment, it was, directly, Mr. Taylor.[1]

[1] In answer to inquiries, Senator Hawley, President of the Centennial Commission, writes: "The Centennial Commission, with the assent of the Board of Finance, made me a committee of one on all matters of ceremony, the most important of which were the exercises on Opening Day and the great celebration on the Fourth

I knew nothing of it whatever until Mr. T. wrote me that it had been settled to invite me. *Indirectly*, I fancy *you* are largely concerned in it; for it seems from Mr. Taylor's account that General Hawley was very glad to have me do the work, and I fancy this must have been owing much to the reputation which you set a-rolling so recently.

If you should see anything about the India papers, I particularly desire to get it: for I fancy that Mr. Kirk was not quite as pleased with them as with other works of mine, and I would therefore hail any sign of their popularity. I do not have time to read any papers; life is getting so full to me that I scarcely know how

of July. Of course I did not presume to act without the best advice I could get. My warm, patriotic, and eminently unselfish adviser and friend in the matter was Bayard Taylor. I easily selected Theodore Thomas to take charge of the music, and a great orchestra and a great chorus were secured. I wanted a hymn from Lowell, who 'begged off,' as the phrase is, or Whittier. I visited both, and finally secured Mr. Whittier, who wrote the charming hymn you may recollect. We then selected the musical composers, Mr. Paine and Mr. Dudley Buck, and decided, very likely upon the suggestion of Thomas, that we should have a cantata, or some sort of a composition of that description. It was Mr. Taylor who first brought Mr. Lanier to my attention. I believe I knew as much as this, that there was a promising writer of that name. We were anxious to secure participation from the Southern States. Mr. Taylor and I talked the matter over very carefully, and he showed me, I think, some writings of Mr. Lanier's, but I relied very largely upon his judgment, and decided to invite Mr. Lanier. We were all of us always glad that we had done so. The Cantata was somewhat unusual in style and character; that is to say, it was original, but it was charmingly so, and both Buck and Thomas thought it very remarkably adapted to our needs. I saw something of Mr. Lanier, but not much. What I did see impressed me very favorably, and I have a very kind and tender recollection of that gentleman."

I am going to win through the next two months' work.

After that, though, there is a charming *possibility* ahead of me which holds the frequent sight of *you* among its delights. (None of this to be mentioned yet.) When Theodore Thomas passed through here a few days ago, to my great surprise he told me that his orchestra would probably be increased during the summer, and that he would like me to take the additional flute in it. I had played several duos with his first flute, — Wehner, — and it is to his voluntary recommendation that I owe the offer. It would be very charming for me; and is such a compliment to a player wholly untaught as I am, and but recently out of the country, that I 'm indulging myself in considerable gratification over it.

Mr. Buck writes me that he has now completed his sketches for the Cantata, and is going at once to the work of scoring it for orchestra and voices. He seems immensely pleased with the text, and we have gotten on together with perfect harmony during the process of fitting together the words and the music, which has been wholly accomplished by letter.

By the way, there are two alterations which I think I have made since your copy was sent you. They are: —

> Now praise to God's *oft-granted* grace,
> Now praise to man's *undaunted* face;

the two underscored words having been added; and the last four lines — which did not roll with enough majesty to suit me — have been entirely remodelled, to read thus:

> Then, Music, from this height of time my Word unfold:
> In thy large signals all men's hearts Man's Heart behold:
> Mid-heaven unroll thy chords as friendly flags unfurled,
> And wave the world's best lover's welcome to the world.

Pray make these alterations in your copy. Also in the Huguenot stanza, instead of "Toil e'en when brother-wars," write "Toil when wild brother-wars," etc. So, God bless you both.

BALTIMORE, *April* 11, 1876.

By a miraculous burst of hard work since early this morning, I've managed to get ready a few minutes before time for me to start, and I devote those to sending you a line which may convey to you how sorry I was to miss you yesterday. You will care to know that Mr. Kirk gave me three hundred dollars for the poem,[1] but that includes book-copyright and all. Write me at Exchange Hotel, Montgomery, Ala. If you only knew what an uplifting you have always been to your friend,

S. L.!

MACON, GA., *April* 27, 1876.

May and I ran over here yesterday from Montgomery, Ala., where I have been spending the time since I saw you, with my brother's family and my own. My father lives here; and we are to remain about five days, when May returns to the children at Montgomery, and I hasten back to Philadelphia. I therefore hope to see you within a week.

I've been such a subject and helpless victim of ovation among the good people of these regions that the time has never seemed to come when I could answer your good letter. The Southern people make a great deal more of my appointment to write the Cantata poem than I had ever expected, and it really seems to be regarded by them as one of the most substantial tokens of

[1] "Psalm of the West," Lippincott's Magazine, June, 1876.

reconciliation yet evinced by that vague *tertium quid* which they are accustomed to represent to themselves under the general term of "the North." I am astonished, too, to find what a hold "Corn" has taken upon all classes. Expressions come to me, in great number, from men whom I never supposed accessible by any poetry whatever; and these recognitions arrive hand [-in-hand] with those from persons of the highest culture. The "Tribune" notice of the Cantata has been copied by a great many Southern papers, and I think it materially assisted in starting the poem off properly; though the people here are so enthusiastic in my favor at present that they are quite prepared to accept blindly anything that comes from me. Of course I understand all this, and any success seems cheap which depends so thoroughly on local pride as does my present position with the South; yet, in view of the long and bitter struggle which I must make up my mind to wage in carrying out those extensions of poetic Forms about which all my thoughts now begin to converge, it is pleasant to find that I have at least the nucleus of an audience which will be willing to receive me upon the plane of mere blind faith until time shall have given a more scientific basis to their understandings.

I have seen a quotation (in the Baltimore "Bulletin," which indignantly takes up the cudgel in my behalf) of one sentence from "The ——," which makes me suppose that I have had a harsh reception from the New York papers generally, in the matter of the Cantata text. The "Bulletin" represents "The ——" as saying that the poem is like "a communication from the spirit of Nat Lee through a Bedlamite medium." Nothing rejoices me more than the inward perception how utterly the

time, and the frame of mind, are passed by in which anything of this sort gives me the least disturbance. Six months ago this would have hurt me, even against my will. Now it seems only a little grotesque episode, — just as when a few minutes ago I sat in my father's garden, here, and heard a catbird pause, in the midst of the most exquisite roulades and melodies, to mew, — and then take up his song again.

What a fearsome long screed, — and all about Me ! But it is not with the least malice prepense : you are to reflect that I 've just stolen away, from a half-dozen engagements, to my father's office, in an unspeakable spring morning, to send you a little message out of my heart, — wherein, truly, whenever I think of you, there is always instantly born a spring full of gardens, and of song-birds that never *mew*.

I hope so soon to kiss the hands of your two ladies that I send no further messages now save the old one that I am always their and your friend, S. L.

WEST CHESTER, PA., *October* 4, 1876.

I had expected to be in Philadelphia to-day, and to answer your kind inquiries in person. But some of those hateful things mildly called circumstances beyond one's control prevented, and I send a note to say how much obliged we have been by your thoughtful communications from Brunswick. Our advices from Mr. Day,[1] which had been delayed in some way, now arrive regularly.

I returned from Baltimore late on Saturday. Mr. Gilman, President of Johns Hopkins University, received me with great cordiality. I took tea with him on Thurs-

[1] Mrs. Lanier's father.

day, and he devoted his entire evening to discussing with me some available method of connecting me with the University officially. The main difficulty was in adjusting the special work which I wish to do to the existing scheme of the institution. I found that Mr. Gilman was familiar with all my poems, and he told me that he had thought of inviting me to a position in the University last winter, but did not know whether I had ever pursued any special studies. He had been greatly attracted by the Cantata, and its defence. It was finally agreed that a proposition should be made to the Trustees to create for me a sort of nondescript chair of "Poetry and Music," giving me leave to shape my lectures into any mould I desired. He is to choose whatever time may seem suitable to him, in which to broach the project, and will then write me the result. I have no doubt of his sincere desire for the favorable consummation of the business; and inasmuch as the most happy relations have heretofore existed between him and the Trustees, it would seem that the prospect is good.

I am better than when you saw me last, but still suffering much with cough. May is much worn with nursing Harry, who has been quite troublesome of nights.

I hope you are both well. I 'm trying hard to get May off to Phila[da] again soon, for a day and a night; the tonic of seeing or hearing anything beautiful seems to have a wonderful effect on her. She joins in loving messages to you both. . . .

The hope of filling that "nondescript chair of Poetry and Music" hovered before Lanier during that summer

and autumn, but in spite of Lanier's fitness and of President Gilman's inclination the offer was not made. Later, indeed, three years later, when the poet's sands were almost run, the Trustees of the University gave Lanier an appointment, and he delivered two courses of lectures with such conspicuous success that, after his death, Johns Hopkins University honored him with a memorial tablet, and has been glad to be associated with his rising fame.

II

Lanier's connection with the Centennial Exhibition brought him, during the summer of 1876, into many pleasant relations; but, unfortunately, his health declined. He passed several months at West Chester, Pa., where he wrote "Clover" and "The Waving of the Corn;" and then, when autumn came, he returned to Philadelphia in what seemed a dying condition. For many weeks he was tenderly nursed at the Peacocks', until, having regained a little strength, it was evident that he must go South if he would survive the winter. Accordingly, leaving the children behind, he and his wife journeyed to Florida as fast as his feebleness permitted. His first note, written on a postal card, is dated "Cedar Keys, Fla., December 20th, 1876." He says: "Through many perils and adventures we are so far safely on our way, in much better condition than could have been expected. We leave for Tampa presently. It is about 125 miles southward; but we stop at Manatee, and do not reach Tampa until to-morrow night, — spending thirty-six hours in the steamer. We have been wishing all the morning that you might pace these white sands with us, in the heavenly weather. Will write you immediately from Tampa."

Tampa, Fla., *December 27, 1876.*

On arriving here we find that your friendship has as usual anticipated us. May and I, strolling down to the

Post-office to rent a box, and not daring to think of letters, are told by the clerk that he thinks there is something for us, — and the something turns out to be your pleasant budget which we incontinently open and devour, sitting down on the steps of the Post-office for that purpose, to the wonderment of the natives. Your news of our dear manikins is the first we have had, and is a fair gift for our Christmas. . . .

The letters you sent were all pleasant in one way or another. One is from H. M. Alden, Editor "Harper's Magazine," enclosing check for fifteen dollars and accepting the poem ("The Waving of the Corn") sent him by me through Bayard Taylor. Another is a very cordial letter from "Geo. C. Eggleston, Literary Editor Evening Post," making tender of brotherhood to me in a really affectionate way, and declaring that "the keen delight with which he recently read my volume of poems sharpens the pang he feels in knowing that one in whose work he sees so rich a promise lies on a bed of illness."

The postal card is from Gilder, whom I had requested to make a slight addition to my article on "The Orchestra" in Scribner's.

The fourth letter is, as you guessed, from Emma Stebbins, and I enclose it for you to read. It seems from the last portion of it that she has quite abandoned the idea of writing the life of Charlotte Cushman, substituting for that the project of merely printing a Memorial Volume.[1]

[1] Miss Stebbins subsequently published a life of Miss Cushman (Boston: Houghton, Osgood & Co., 1878). This work had been assigned to Lanier, and a contract made by him with the publishers, when the illness of Miss Stebbins, who was to cull material from letters accessible to her alone, caused Miss Cushman's family to cancel the engagement.

The "Bulletin" with the notice you mention has not yet arrived. I am very much pleased that the "Psalm of the West" has given Mrs. Champney a text to preach from. One begins to add to the intrinsic delight of prophet-hood the less lonesome joy of human helpfulness — when one finds the younger poets resting upon one for a support and buttress in this way.

You will be glad to know that we are situated much more comfortably than we could have hoped. Tampa is the most forlorn collection of little one-story frame houses imaginable, and as May and I walked behind our landlord, who was piloting us to the Orange Grove Hotel, our hearts fell nearer and nearer towards the sand through which we dragged. But presently we turned a corner, and were agreeably surprised to find ourselves in front of a large three-story house with many odd nooks and corners, altogether clean and comfortable in appearance, and surrounded by orange-trees in full fruit. We have a large room in the second story, opening upon a generous balcony fifty feet long, into which stretch the liberal arms of a fine orange-tree, holding out their fruitage to our very lips. In front is a sort of open plaza, containing a pretty group of gnarled live oaks full of moss and mistletoe.

They have found out my public character already: somebody who had travelled with me recognized me on the street yesterday and told mine host. He and his wife are all kindness, having taken a fancy, I imagine, to my sweet angel May. They have just sent up a lovely bunch of roses and violets from the garden, — a sentimental attention which finds a pleasant parallel in the appearance of a servant at our door before breakfast to inquire whether we prefer our steak fried or broiled.

The weather is perfect summer, and I luxuriate in great draughts of balmy air uncontaminated with city-smokes and furnace-dusts. This has come not a moment too soon; for the exposures of the journey had left my poor lung in most piteous condition. I am now better, however; and May is in good case, except that the languid air takes the spring from her step, and inclines her much to laziness. . . .

We have three mails a week: two by stage from Gainesville (which is on the railroad from Fernandina to Cedar Keys) and one by steamer from Cedar Keys. Address me simply "Tampa, Fla." I have a box (No. 8: — I don't think there are more than twenty-five or thirty in all) at the Post-office, and the clerk knows me: as in fact everybody else does, — a stranger is a stranger in Tampa. . . .

(Over.)

DEAR MR. PEACOCK: Sidney has forgotten my message — which entreated Mrs. Peacock (Heaven bless her!) to consider my letters *unanswerable*. You are *one* in our thoughts and affections, and we are content to hear from either of you. And I am so selfish as to wish that she should always be glad when my poor letters come. When you see Dr. Lippe pray give him our best regards and say that we will write as soon as we have had time to know how Sidney is.

Your loving MARY D. L.

P. S. No. 15. I enclose the two receipts for the silver: Robbins' and the Trust Company's. We will write about it some future time: meantime as to the set at Robbins', place it wherever you like. S. L.

TAMPA, *December* 31, 1876.

I am writing a line to send you both a New Year's kiss from us two. We have had a great change in the weather: a couple of days ago the hyperborean blasts turned our pretty summer quite out of doors, and we have had for thirty-six hours a temperature which reminds us very forcibly of a New Year's Day at the North. As we sit over our blazing knots of "fat lightwood" we think with double vividness of your two dear faces, and wish that they were by ours or ours by them. . . .

The Magazine has arrived, and your lovely notice of my little "Evening Song" [1] gives me genuine pleasure. I see too that the poem has smitten the hitherto-invulnerable R. Shelton McKenzie under the fifth rib. This is a triumph indeed. The "Bulletin" with the notice from the "Evening Post" has also arrived. The letter from "Lippincott's" which you forwarded was an enclosure of check for ten dollars for the "Evening Song."

May is doing well; and I, with some setbacks, am on the whole improving. I have found a shaggy gray mare upon whose back I thrid the great pine forests daily, much to my delight. Nothing seems so restorative to me as a good gallop. We have now only two mails a week, and these take a long time to go and come. If there should ever be any occasion to telegraph us, a despatch can be sent to *Tuckertown* (which is on the telegraph line, thirty miles from here), whence the operators will, if so requested, forward it by courier on horseback to Tampa.

I sent you the two silver receipts by last mail. Forward me whatever you happen to see about the little

[1] Printed in "Lippincott's Magazine," January, 1877.

Song: I wish to send the notices to Dudley Buck, who has set this poem to music. God bless you both, — say May and S. L.

TAMPA, FLA., *January* 17, 1877.

I wrote you immediately upon arriving here, enclosing the two receipts for the silver; and I believe some sort of greeting has gone from one of us to one of you by nearly every mail, since our arrival. I only mention this because our Florida mail arrangements are of the very slowest description, and, as we have yet had nothing from you written since any of our communications reached you, we presume the latter have taken the very uttermost limit of time in getting to you.

We fare slowly on, in health. May has been very much affected by the warm weather which has prevailed for the past two weeks, and suffers much from lassitude with some appearance of malarial symptoms. I think my lung is healing gradually, and although I have a great deal of hoarseness, it does not seem to be attended with any other serious accompaniment. I certainly improve in strength, though pulled down, as indeed are all the healthy people about us, by the languorous summer temperature.

I think we will have to sell the silver; if you can get $350 for it, it may go at that. Possibly we will sell it for old silver, after a while, at $200: but I would be glad if you would see whether any silver dealer with whom you should leave it (after Robbins) can get an offer of $350. . . .

I am writing in haste, having come in from a ride, horseback, just as the mail is about to close. . . .

TAMPA, FLA., *March* 25, 1877.

MY DEAREST MARIA PEACOCK: . . . I wish we were spending this March day in your dear little Brown Study with you. I have an inexpressible longing to see you when you will not be — as during that last month — anxious at heart on my account. This might now very well be; for although many breaks and exasperating interruptions have chequered my progress since I came here, yet in comparing my present condition with the state I was in when I left you, no room is left for doubt that my lung is certainly healing, and that the rest is only matter of time and warm weather.

We expect to leave Tampa on the 5th April, for Brunswick, where we will remain until May. Our after-programme is to spend the month of May in Macon, and to return to Philadelphia in June. Consider that our address, therefore, is changed to "Care of Chas. Day, Brunswick, Ga."

May has been suffering much with malarial influences, and I am impatient for the time when she may return to the bracing northern air which appears to agree with her so well. She sends you all manner of loving messages.

Please ask Mr. Gibson as soon as the rest of the silver money comes in to send for Dr. Schell's bill, and discharge it. I have been more pained about the long standing-over of it than I can tell you. Did you see my "Beethoven" in the "Galaxy"?[1] A bad misprint occurred in the punctuation at the end of the eighth verse, where somebody inserted a semicolon. In the original there is nothing: the two verses (8th and 9th) being intended to run together, *i. e.* the luminous lightnings

[1] "Beethoven," printed in the "Galaxy" for March, 1877.

blindly strike the sailor praying on his knees along with, &c. In reading other articles in this Magazine I observe that the proof must have been very badly read.

I have had a very affectionate letter from Emma Stebbins, enclosing a fifty-dollar bill which she wanted to loan me.

My thoughts are much upon my French poem — the Jacquerie outburst — in these days. If Mr. Hayes would only appoint me consul somewhere in the south of France ! ! !

BRUNSWICK, GA., *April* 26, 1877.

If I had as many fingers as your astounding servant-maid, and each one could wield a pen separately, I still would n't be able to write the fair messages which continually construct themselves in my heart to you both. That such a very pitiful fraction of these has actually reached you during the last few weeks is due to mine ancient infirmity in the matter of driving the quill, and to May's constant occupation with her father and brother. These poor lonely men live here in a house to themselves with no women or children about them; and when May comes with her bright ways and intelligent sympathies she has both hands, lips, and heart very busy from morning till night.

I suppose you 've seen a little *extravaganza* of mine in " St. Nicholas " for May. The proof-sheets were sent me at Tampa, and I promptly corrected and returned them: but they seem not to have arrived in time, and I desolate myself at finding some miserable repetitions and awkward expressions, which I had carefully amended, appearing nevertheless, — beside some very bad punctuation systematically interpolated all the way through by some other

hand than mine. The illustrations are charming, however, and I feel as if I ought to write a special letter of thanks to Mr. Bensell for the evident care he has taken. The story I meant to be only such an incongruous mélange as one might "make up as he went along" for a lot of children about his knees; and its very intentional incongruities must have been serious stumbling-blocks to the engraver.

I sincerely regret the continued illness of Mr. Wells.[1] He was so full of life and so overbrimming with his quips and his quiddities, that I can scarcely realize him as a sick man. Pray send him my cordial greetings when you write, with my earnest wishes for his speedy recovery.

I wrote Mrs. Peacock just before we left Tampa. We remain here until the fifth of May; after which our address will be "Macon, Ga." We think to spend a month there; and then, if I continue to improve, to make our way back northward. I can't tell you how famished I am for the Orchestra: an imperious hunger drives me towards it.

We both send a kiss to you both. If Miss Phelps is with you, we'll put in two, mine being particularly by way of response for her kind note. I long to see you all.

MACON, GA., *May* 26, 1877.

They have had a family gathering here to meet me; and what with fondling numerous new babies that have arrived since I last met the parents thereof, and with much talk of matters high and low, I have not found time to send my love to you. I have gained greatly in strength within the last three weeks, and although I have

[1] Francis Wells, assistant editor of the "Evening Bulletin."

still much discomfort at times I feel perfectly sure that I have quite got the upper hand of this particular attack at least. We propose to start for Philadelphia within two weeks from now, waiting so long only to be sure of escaping any possible caprice of this very variable Spring. The prospect of speedily turning northward gives us, as you can imagine, great delight: for it is a prospect which holds in its "middle distance" you two, and our dear monkeys for whom our arms are fairly hungry.

I long to be steadily writing again. I'm taken with a poem pretty nearly every day, and have to content myself with making a note of its train of thought on the back of whatever letter is in my coat-pocket. I don't write it out, because I find my poetry now wholly unsatisfactory in consequence of a certain haunting impatience which has its root in the straining uncertainty of my daily affairs; and I am trying with all my might to put off composition of all sorts until some approach to the certainty of next week's dinner shall remove this remnant of haste, and leave me that repose which ought to fill the artist's firmament while he is creating. Perhaps indeed with returning bodily health I shall acquire strength to attain this serenity in spite of all contingencies.

Address me here if you write within the next ten days. May would send a kiss to you both if she knew I was writing. Cordial greetings to Miss Phelps if she is now with you. I hope Mr. Wells continues to improve.

40 Mt. Vernon Place, Baltimore, Md.,
June 13, 1877.

I am really distressed to know that you should have spent your day at Washington in the unprofitable busi-

ness of pottering about those dreary Departments in my behalf: but I won't lecture you for your unearthly goodness to me.

May and I are to go to Washington next Monday, to visit Judge Advocate General Dunn, who is a son-in-law of my kinsman J. F. D. Lanier (of New York), and who has extended a very cordial invitation to us. We will also meet there General Humphreys, Chief of the Engineer Corps, who is an old friend of May's mother, and has always made a great pet of May herself. It seems like stretching our hearts to stay away from the boys longer; yet we have determined finally to do it, inasmuch as we do not know when we will have another opportunity to meet these friends.

As for the "application:" you must know, my dear good Friend, that all *that* matter was gotten up without my knowledge, and has been carried on by my father and Mr. Lanier of New York. When they finally wrote to me of it, I replied (after a great struggle which I have not the heart to detail to you) that inasmuch as I had never been a party man of any sort I did not see with what grace I could ask any appointment; and that, furthermore, I could not see it to be delicate, on general principles, for me to make *personal* application for any particular office: but that I would be grateful if they would simply cause my name to be mentioned to the proper persons as that of a person who might be suitable for certain classes of appointments, and that I would accept with pleasure any result of such an application. This has been done: my name has been mentioned to Mr. Sherman[1] (and to Mr. Evarts,[2] I believe)

[1] Secretary of the Treasury.
[2] Secretary of State.

by quite cordially disposed persons. But I do not think any formal application has been entered, — though I do not know. I *hope* not: for then the reporters will get hold of it, and I scarcely know what I should do if I should see my name figuring alongside of Jack Brown's and Foster Blodgett's and the others of my native State, — as would quickly be the case.

But I can speak of all this when I see you. It will be probably nine or ten days before I have that pleasure, — even if you shall have returned to Phila[da] by that time. Pray send me a line (see address, above date of this letter) to let me know your motions. . . . Don't think me finical, and don't think me anything but your faithful

S. L.

CHADD'S FORD, PA., *August* 7, 1877.

This is but an hour old; and after sending it off to Harper's, I 've made a hasty copy for you, thinking you would care to see it. The poor dove whose sorrow it commemorates wakes me every morning, calling from the lovely green woods about us.

We are charmed with our place. I myself have rather too much pot-boiling to improve much, but the boys are having a royal time. May sends a kiss to you both, as does your faithful S. L.

[Enclosure.]

THE DOVE: A SONG.[1]

If thou, if thou, O blue and silver Morn,
Should'st call along the curving sphere: "Remain,
Sweet Night, my Love! Nay, leave me not forlorn!"
With soft halloos of heavenly love and pain: —

[1] First printed, with many changes, in "Scribner's Magazine," May, 1878.

Should'st thou, past Spring, a-cower in coverts dark,
'Gainst proud supplanting Summer sing thy plea
And move the mighty woods through mailèd bark
Till tender heartbreak throb in every tree: —

(Ah, grievous *If*, wilt turn to *Yea* full soon?)
— If thou, my Heart, long holden from thy Love,
Should'st beat and burn in mellow shocks of tune: —
— Each might but mock yon deep-sequestered dove!

CHADD'S FORD, PA., *September* 8, 1877.

I am called to Washington for the purpose of prosecuting my affairs, — which are delayed much beyond expectation, — and am obliged to anticipate my income a little, being out of funds for a week. Please loan me fifty dollars, if you can do so without inconvenience to yourself. You can send your check payable to my order. — Which takes my breath away, and I can't say anything more now.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *September* 27, 1877.

Yours was forwarded to me here. Just as I received your check, a severe pleuritic attack seized me, and kept me in great pain for ten days. I then got up from bed to come here, in the desperate necessity to do what could be done. Last Monday at daylight an exhausting hæmorrhage came, which has kept me confined to my room ever since. In this enforced inactivity, I have had nothing to return to you. This morning a check comes from Lippincott for a little story I sent, and I enclose it, endorsed to your order. Please let me know what your address will be, so that I may send the remaining twenty-five at the earliest possible moment.

There does not appear the least hope of success here. Three months ago the order was given by Secretary

Sherman that I should have the first vacancy: but the appointment-clerk, who received the order, is a singular person, and I am told there are rings within rings in the Department to such an extent that vacancies are filled by petty chiefs of division without ever being reported at all to the proper officers. You will scarcely believe that, in my overwhelming desire to get some routine labor by which I might be relieved from this exhausting magazine work so as to apply my whole mind to my long poem on which I have been engaged, I have allowed a friend to make application to every department in Washington for even the humblest position — seventy-five dollars a month and the like — but without success. I also made personal application to several people in Baltimore for similar employment, but fruitlessly. Altogether it seems as if there was n't any place for me in this world, and if it were not for May I should certainly quit it, in mortification at being so useless.

I hope you will have a pleasant holiday. Give my love to my dear Maria Peacock, and say how glad I am to think of her long relief from the household and other cares which give her so much trouble.

55 Lexington St., Baltimore, Md.,
November 3, 1877.

I have not had the courage to write you without enclosing the check for twenty-five dollars, which ought to have gone to you long ago. I still have n't a cent to send; and am writing only to answer your inquiries whose kindliness might otherwise go unacknowledged.

All sorts of things were promised to the friends who were good enough to intercede at Washington in my behalf: but nothing has come of it. In truth I should

long ago have abandoned all ideas in that direction and resumed the thread of my magazine work, had it not been for illness which prevented me from writing much, and thus kept me entertaining some little expectation. The hæmorrhage, however, which disabled me from work temporarily, has greatly relieved my lung, and I am now stronger than at any time in the last fifteen months. My whole soul is bursting with chaotic poems, and I hope to do some good work during the coming year.

I have found it quite essential to my happiness and health to have some quarters, however rude, which I could regard as permanent for the next four or five years, instead of drifting about the world. We have therefore established ourselves in four rooms, arranged somewhat as a French Flat, in the heart of Baltimore. We have a gas-stove, on which my Comrade magically produces the best coffee in the world, and this, with fresh eggs (boiled over the same handy little machine), bread, butter, and milk, forms our breakfast. Our dinner is sent to us from a restaurant in the same building with our rooms, and is served in our apartment without extra charge.

As for my plans for the future: I have set on foot another attempt to get a place in the Johns Hopkins University: I also have a prospect of employment as an assistant at the Peabody Library here; and there is still a possibility of a committee-clerkship in Washington. Meantime, however, I am just resuming work for the editors: my nearest commission is to write a Christmas poem for "Every Saturday," an ambitious new weekly paper just started in Baltimore. The editor wishes to illustrate the poem liberally and use it as an advertisement by making some fuss over it.

There! You have a tolerable abstract of my past, present, and future. . . . Have you seen my Wagner poem in the November "Galaxy"? I have *not;* and, as it was much involved, and as I did n't see any proof-sheet, and as finally the "Galaxy's" proof-reader is notoriously bad, — I suspect it is a pretty muddle of nonsense. And so, God bless you both.

55 Lexington St., Baltimore,
December 3, 1877.

Your letter was heartily received by May and me, and the stamps brought acclamations from the three young men at the breakfast-table. We had been talking of you more than usual for several days; and May had been recalling that wonderful Thanksgiving Day a year ago when the kindness of you and my dear Maria seemed to culminate in the mysterious Five-hundred-dollar-bill which came up on the breakfast-tray. What a couple you are, anyhow: you and that same Maria with the Cape-jessamine-textured throat!

I indulged in a hæmorrhage immediately after reaching home, which kept me out of the combat for ten days. I then plunged in and brought captive forth a long Christmas poem[1] for "Every Saturday," an ambitious young weekly of Baltimore. Have you seen my "Puzzled Ghost in Florida," in "Appleton's'" for December? . . .

We had another key to the silver chest. It contained a second set of old family plate, which we now use daily and in which we take great comfort. There are no other papers concerning it.

I hope you had a pleasant visit in New York. . . . I 've just received a letter from Emma Stebbins. She is

[1] "Hard Times in Elfland."

at the Cushmans', in Newport, and much improved in health. She has finished six chapters of her book on Miss Cushman, and may have it ready for the publishers by next fall.

Wife and I have been out to look at a lovely house to-day, with eight rooms and many charming appliances, which we find we can rent for less than we now pay for our four rooms. We think of taking it straightway, and will do so if a certain half-hundred of dollars for which we hope reaches us in time. . . .

33 Denmead St., Baltimore, Md.,
January 6, 1878.

The painters, the whitewashers, the plumbers, the locksmiths, the carpenters, the gas-fitters, the stove-put-up-ers, the carmen, the piano-movers, the carpet-layers, — all these have I seen, bargained with, reproached for bad jobs, and finally paid off: I have also coaxed my landlord into all manner of outlays for damp walls, cold bath-rooms, and other like matters: I have furthermore bought at least three hundred and twenty-seven household utensils which suddenly came to be absolutely necessary to our existence: I have moreover hired a colored gentlewoman who is willing to wear out my carpets, burn out my range, freeze out my water-pipes, and be generally useful: I have also moved my family into our new home, have had a Xmas tree for the youngsters, have looked up a cheap school for Harry and Sidney, have discharged my daily duties as first flute of the Peabody Orchestra, have written a couple of poems and part of an essay on Beethoven and Bismarck, have accomplished at least a hundred thousand miscellaneous necessary nothings, — and have *not*, in consequence of all the afore-

said, sent to you and my dear Maria the loving greetings whereof my heart has been full during the whole season. Maria's cards were duly distributed, and we were all touched with her charming little remembrances. With how much pleasure do I look forward to the time when I may kiss her hand in my own house! We are in a state of supreme content with our new home: it really seems to me as incredible that myriads of people have been living in their own homes heretofore as to the young couple with a first baby it seems impossible that a great many other couples have had similar prodigies. It is simply too delightful. Good heavens, how I wish that the whole world had a Home!

I confess I *am* a little nervous about the gas-bills, which must come in, in the course of time; and there are the water-rates, and several sorts of imposts and taxes: but then, the dignity of being liable for such things! is a very supporting consideration. No man is a Bohemian who has to pay water-rates and a street-tax. Every day when I sit down in my dining-room — *my* dining-room! — I find the wish growing stronger that each poor soul in Baltimore, whether saint or sinner, could come and dine with me. How I would carve out the merry-thoughts for the old hags! How I would stuff the big wall-eyed rascals till their rags ripped again! There was a knight of old times who built the dining-hall of his castle across the highway, so that every wayfarer must perforce pass through: there the traveller, rich or poor, found always a trencher and wherewithal to fill it. Three times a day, in my own chair at my own table, do I envy that knight and wish that I might do as he did.

Send me some word of you two. I was in Philadel-

phia for part of a night since I saw you, being on my way to Germantown to see Mr. Kirk. I had to make the whole visit between two rehearsals of the Orchestra, and so could only run from train to train except between twelve P. M. and six, which I consumed in sleeping at the Continental.

We all send you heartfelt wishes for the New Year. May you be as happy as you are dear to your faithful

S. L.

33 DENMEAD ST., BALTIMORE,
January 11, 1878.

To-morrow I will transfer to you by telegraph one hundred and ten dollars; and the remaining forty, I *hope*, on Monday, certainly during the five days following.

I believe it was last Sunday night that I wrote you: on the following morning I awoke with a raging fever, and have been in bed ever since, racked inexpressibly by my old foe, the Pleurodynia. I have crawled out of bed this afternoon, but must go back soon. Will probably be about again on Monday.

Tortured as I was, this morning, with a living egg of pain away in under my collar bone, I shook till I was at least uniformly sore all over, with reading your brilliant critique on the great "artiste" Squirt in his magnificent impersonation of Snooks. The last sentence nearly took the top of my head off. I wish you would keep it up a little while, and fly at the Metropolis as well as at the provinces. For example: "The following contribution for our new morning (or Sunday) paper comes accompanied by a note stating that the writer has been employed as funny editor of the New York (anything,

Universe, Age, et cet.), but desires a larger field of usefulness with us;" and hereto you might append an imitation of the humorous column of "The World," for instance, in which anything under heaven is taken as a caption, and the editorial then made up of all the possible old proverbs, quotations, popular sayings, and slang which have a word, or even a syllable, in common with the text.

Or you might give an exact reproduction (the more exact, the more ludicrous) of one of those tranquilly stupid political editorials in "The ——," which seem as massive as the walls of Troy, and are really nothing but condensations of arrogant breath.

But of course you *won't* do anything of the sort, for why embroil yourself? and I 'm only forecasting what might be done in a better world.

We all send our love to you and Maria. May is pretty well fagged with nursing me, plus the housekeeping cares.

BALTIMORE, MD., *January* 30, 1878.

It's no use trying to tell you the bitterness with which I found myself a couple of days behindhand with that hundred. I was in bed, ill, and was depending on a friend who had promised to come by my house and transact this along with some other business for me down town. He was prevented from coming as expected, and I was without remedy. I enclose P. O. order for twenty-five. The balance will go to you soon. Please don't despair of me. My illness was a complete marplot to all my plans for a month or more.

I came through Ph[a] night before last, on my way home from New York. I ran round to see you, but

you had gone to the theatre. Next morning I was compelled to hurry home without the pleasure of kissing my dear Maria's hand: our Peabody Orchestra meets at five in the afternoon, and I was obliged to reach Baltimore in time for that.

We are all in tolerable condition, greatly enjoying our crude half-furnished home. I have been mainly at work on some unimportant prose matter for pot-boilers; but I get off a short poem occasionally, and in the background of my mind am writing my Jacquerie.

It is very thoughtful of you to send the "Bulletin." I did not know it was being continued at Chadd's Ford, else I should have had the address changed. Both May and I find a great deal in the paper to interest us. We send loving messages to you twain. The boys are all at school.

180 St. Paul St., Baltimore, Md.,
November 5, 1878.

I have been "allowing" — as the Southern negroes say — that I would write you, for the last two weeks; but I had a good deal to say, and have n't had time to say it.

During my studies for the last six or eight months a thought which was at first vague has slowly crystallized into a purpose, of quite decisive aim. The lectures which I was invited to deliver last winter before a private class met with such an enthusiastic reception as to set me thinking very seriously of the evident delight with which grown people found themselves receiving systematic instruction in a definite study. This again put me upon reviewing the whole business of Lecturing which has risen to such proportions in our country,

but which, every one must feel, has now reached its climax and must soon give way — like all things — to something better. The fault of the lecture system as at present conducted — a fault which must finally prove fatal to it — is that it is too fragmentary, and presents too fragmentary a mass — *indigesta moles* — of facts before the hearers. Now if, instead of such a series as that of the popular Star Course (for instance) in Philadelphia, a scheme of lectures should be arranged which would amount to the *systematic presentation* of a *given subject*, then the audience would receive a substantial benefit, and would carry away some genuine possession at the end of the course. The subject thus systematically presented might be either scientific (as Botany, for example, or Biology popularized, and the like), or domestic (as detailed in the accompanying printed extract under the "Household" School), or artistic, or literary.

This stage of the investigation put me to thinking of schools for grown people. Men and women leave college nowadays just at the time when they are really prepared to study with effect. There is indeed a vague notion of this abroad; but it remains vague. Any intelligent grown man or woman readily admits that it would be well — indeed, many whom I have met sincerely desire — to pursue some regular course of thought; but there is no guidance, no organized means of any sort, by which people engaged in ordinary avocations can accomplish such an aim.

Here, then, seems to be, first, a universal admission of the usefulness of organized intellectual pursuit for business people; secondly, an underlying desire for it by many of the people themselves; and thirdly, an

existing institution (the lecture system) which, if the idea were once started, would quickly adapt itself to the new conditions.

In short, the present miscellaneous lecture courses ought to die and be born again as *Schools for Grown People*.

It was with the hope of effecting at least the beginning *of* a beginning of such a movement that I got up the "Shakspere Course" in Baltimore. I wished to show, to such a class as I could assemble, how much more genuine profit there would be in studying *at first hand*, under the guidance of an enthusiastic interpreter, the writers and conditions of a particular epoch (for instance) than in reading any amount of commentary or in hearing any number of miscellaneous lectures on subjects which range from Palestine to Pottery in the course of a week. With this view I arranged my own part of the Shakspere course so as to include a quite thorough presentation of the whole *science* of poetry as preparatory to a serious and profitable study of some of the greatest singers in our language.

I wish to make a similar beginning — with all these ulterior aims — in Philadelphia. I had hoped to interest Mr. Furness[1] in the idea, particularly because I suspected that some local influence would be needed to push forward a matter depending so much on ulterior purposes which are at the same time difficult to explain in full and slow in becoming fully comprehended by the average mind of the public. I enclose you Mr. Furness's letter, which I take to be a polite refusal to have anything to do with it; and I may add that Mrs. Wistar has

[1] Horace Howard Furness, America's foremost Shaksperian scholar.

made inquiries which do not give much encouragement from *her* world. But difficulties of this sort always end, with me, — after the first intense sigh has spent itself, — in clothing a project with new charms; and I am now determined not to abandon my Philadelphia branch until I shall seem like a fool to pursue it farther. *Apropos* whereof, a very devoted friend of mine, there, having seen some announcement in the papers of my lectures, writes that she once attended a short course of somewhat similar nature in Philadelphia which was very successful. It was conducted, however, by a gentleman of considerable local reputation. I have one or two other friends there who would help the thing forward; and I write you all this long screed for the purpose of giving you an opportunity to meditate on the entire situation, and to direct me in making a start when I shall come over for that purpose.

The practical method of beginning is to form a class of grown persons, at (say) eight dollars apiece, to whom I will deliver twenty lectures and readings, one each week, on a suitable day and hour to be agreed on, covering about the ground specified in my twenty-four lectures announced in the accompanying programme of the Shakspere course.

If a class of only twenty could be made up, I would cheerfully commence: for I feel confident it would be the beginning of better things. I think I know now of *four* who would join and would heartily forward the business by inquiring among their friends and setting forth its aims.

I have good prospect of forming a class in Washington; and thus, with my special poetic work ("The Songs of Aldhelm," which I believe you will like better than

anything I have written), you see my life will be delightfully *arrangée*, — if things come out properly. Do you think Mr. Henry C. Lea would be interested in such a matter?

— If you write me, after digesting this enormous homily, that you think twenty people could be found, I will come over immediately and make arrangements to *find* them. I have, as I said, several friends who at a word would busy themselves enthusiastically in the matter. . . .

180 St. Paul St., Baltimore,
December 21, 1878.

If love and faithful remembrance were current with the wish-gods I could make you a rare merry Christmas. — I wish I had two millions; I should so like to send you a check for one of 'em, with a request that you make a bonfire of the "Evening Bulletin," and come over here to spend Christmas, — and the rest of your life with me, — on a private car seventy-seven times more luxurious than Lorne's or Mr. Mapleson's. I really *don't* desire that you should spend your life on this car — as I seem to, on reading over my last sentence — but only that you should *come* on it. The great advantage of having a poetic imagination is herein displayed: you see how the simple act of enclosing you a check for twenty-five dollars — that twenty-five which has been due you so long, dear friend! — can set a man's thoughts going.

I have a mighty yearning to see you and my well-beloved Maria; it seems a long time since; and I've learned so many things, — I almost feel as if I had something new to show you.

Bayard Taylor's death [1] slices a huge cantle out of the world for me. I don't yet *know* it, at all; it only seems that he has gone to some other Germany, a little farther off. How strange it all is: he was such a fine fellow, one almost thinks he might have talked Death over and made him forego his stroke. Tell me whatever you may know, outside of the newspaper reports, about his end.

Chas. Scribner's Sons have concluded to publish my "Boy's Froissart," with illustrations. They are holding under advisement my work on English Prosody.[2]

I saw your notice of the "Masque of Poets." The truth is, it is a distressing, an aggravated, yea, an intolerable collection of mediocrity and mere cleverness. Some of the pieces come so near being good that one is ready to tear one's hair and to beat somebody with a stick from pure exasperation that such narrow misses should after all come to no better net result — in the way of art — than so many complete failures. I could find only four poems in the book. As for Guy Vernon, one marvels that a man with any poetic feeling could make so many stanzas of so trivial a thing. It does not even sparkle enough to redeem it as *vers de société*. This is the kind of poetry that is technically called culture-poetry; yet it is in reality the product of a *want* of culture. If these gentlemen and ladies would read the old English poetry — I mean the poetry before Chaucer, the genuine Anglish utterances, from Cædmon in the seventh century to Langland in the fourteenth — they could never be content to put forth these little diffuse prettinesses and dandy kickshaws of verse.

[1] Bayard Taylor, having been appointed minister to Germany, died shortly after reaching Berlin.

[2] "The Science of English Verse," published in 1880.

I am not quite sure but you misinterpreted whatever I may have said about Mr. Furness's letter. I did not mean in the least to blame him; and his note was, I thought, very kind in its terms.

I am in the midst of two essays on Anglo-Saxon poetry which I am very anxious to get in print. These, with the Froissart and my weekly lectures, keep me bound down with work.

God bless you both, and send you many a Christmas, prays your faithful S. L.

I find I am out of stamps, for my check: so must mulct you for two cents.

435 N. Calvert St., Baltimore, *June* 1, 1880.

I've just read your notice of "The Science of English Verse," and cannot help sending a line to say how much it pleases me. It seems a model of the way in which a newspaper should deal with a work of this sort which in the nature of things cannot be fairly described without more space than any ordinary journal can allow.

I was all the more pleased because I had just read a long notice sent me by the ——'s "critic," which, with the best intentions in the world, surely capped the climax of silly misrepresentation. It is perfectly sober to say that if this "critic" had represented Professor Huxley's late treatise on the Crayfish as a cookery-book containing new and ingenious methods of preparing shellfish for the table, and had proceeded to object earnestly that the book was a dangerous one, as stimulating over-nicety in eating, — he would have been every whit as near the truth. Indeed, on thinking of it, I find this is a perfect parallel; for he objected to "The Science of Verse" on the ground that it had "a ten-

dency . . . to exaggerate . . . the undue attention already given to . . . the pretty fripperies of ingenious verse-making!" If the book has one tendency beyond another in this respect, it surely is, as you sensibly say in your last paragraph but one, to make real artists out of those who study it, and to warn off all scribblers from this holy and arduous ground.

But this is the least offence. Although three of the very mottoes on the Titlepage (namely, those of Sir Philip Sidney, of King James, and of Dante) set up the sharpest distinction between Verse and Poetry, — between mere Technic and Inspiration, — and although the Preface presents an ideal of the *poet's* (as distinct from the *versifier's*) mission which culminates in declaring the likeness of all worthy poets to David (who wrote much poetry, but *no verse*), — while, further, the very first ten lines of Chapter I. carry on this distinction to what one would think a point infinitely beyond mistake, — in spite of all, the "critic" gravely makes, and as gravely discusses, the assertion that "in Mr. Lanier's book . . . *poetry* . . . is a mere matter of pleasing sounds and pleasing arrangements of sounds!"

This would be a curiosity of woodenness, if it were not still obscured by another assertion: that this "Science of Verse" originates in "a suggestion" made by Edgar Poe as to the "division into long and short syllables," — which suggestion, he says, "is the key to Mr. Lanier's system"!

It would be quite as accurate to say that Professor Huxley's argument from the transition-forms of the horse in proof of the evolution of species was suggested by King Richard the Third's exclamation of "A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!"

The Easter-card with the lovely design of Corn has been in my work-room's most prominent niche, and is the constant admiration of my visitors, who always quickly recognize its propriety. Tell Maria — between two kisses — that nothing but outrageous absorption could have made me fail so long to acknowledge what has given us all so much pleasure.

— But this letter will make you perspire, with the very sight of its five pages: and so, God bless you.

Your friend, SIDNEY L.

No other letters to Mr. Peacock have been preserved. During the winter of 1880–81 Lanier delivered a course of lectures at Johns Hopkins University on Personality, illustrated by the development of fiction. His strength was already so nearly spent that most of the notes for these lectures had to be dictated in whispers to his wife, and often in the lecture-room his hearers dreaded lest his life should go out while he spoke. Yet when read now, in the volume entitled "The English Novel," these lectures show no sign of mental lassitude; rather are they remarkable for vigor and suggestiveness, and, despite here and there gaps unavoidable in a work unrevised by the author, they form a body of constructive and pregnant criticism not to be overlooked by any one who values a critic who is also an interpreter. During that same winter of extreme bodily feebleness, Lanier wrote the poem "Sunrise," his masterpiece, radiant with beauty, and strong with the spiritual strength which outbraves death. In the following summer they took him to North Carolina, in the hope that amid the balsam of the pines he might at least breathe out his life with less pain. There, on September 7, 1881, he died.

A Poet's Musical Impressions

A Poet's Musical Impressions

THE following letters, with the exception of the first one, were written by Mr. Lanier to his wife between April, 1869, and May, 1876, in his absences from home while at Baltimore, New York, and San Antonio. The selections have been made with the view of including practically all the correspondence which treats of musical subjects, and in pursuance of this idea a number of fragmentary extracts are presented. The opening letters represent Mr. Lanier's first impressions of really great orchestral music; there being no facilities at that time for hearing the best music in his native town. They show also something of the eager suspense which he was feeling at the time. His strongest impulse was always toward music, and his friends had assured him of his ability; but his formal instruction had been limited to a few piano lessons in early childhood, and he was now for the first time meeting with musicians of recognized standing, and, as it were, authoritatively placing himself. Until he received the opinion of those whom he knew to be competent to speak finally, he did not even feel sure that he had a right to follow the promptings of his music longings.

MONTGOMERY, ALA., *October*, 1866.

. . . She is right to cultivate Music, to cling to it: it is the only *reality* left in the world for her and many another like her. It will revolutionize the world, and that not long hence. Let her study it intensely, give

herself to it, enter the very innermost temple and Sanctuary of it. . . . The Altar-steps are wide enough for all the world, and Music inquires not if the worshipper be Vestal or Stained, nor looks to see what dust of other shrines is upon the knees that bend before her. She is utterly unconscious of aught but Love, which pardons all things and receives all natures into the warmth of Its Bosom.

As for my organ-playing,[1] you would be wofully disappointed to hear me. It is all so new, the fingering and pedal-playing and bass-notes and stops, etc., etc., and I have so little time to practise, that I have as yet not acquired anything like such mastery over it as would enable me to render Music in fit style for you to hear. I know, however, that you would like some of the little melodies which I improvise sometimes before service, because you would *understand*. . . .

The poem sent me is nothing less than *delicious*. . . . A mellow radiance plays and wavers through it, like the red spot in an opal.

The man who wrote that poem (a friend says it was James Russell Lowell, but *I* could have sworn some woman wrote it!) was of the enviable sort who *enjoy* music. Some of us would not "enjoy" such an organ-piece as is there described. Our souls would be like sails at sea; and the irresistible storm of Music would *shred* them as a wind shreds canvas, whereof the fragments writhe and lash about in the blast which furiously sports with their agony.

[1] In the Presbyterian church of Dr. Petrie, in Montgomery, Mr. Lanier had once taken the organist's place, in a sudden emergency, and was thereupon invited to retain it, which he consented to do after some demur.

Therefore I, except in some supremely happy moment, could never write a piece like this, wherein one finds nothing of that sorrow-tone which forever winds like a black thread through the glittering brocade of Music. . . .

NEW YORK, *April* 28, 1869.

. . . I've just come from the "Tempest," at the Grand Opera House, corner Twenty-third Street and Eighth Avenue, newly built; and my heart has been so full . . . that although they 're about to shut off lights, I must scratch you a line to carry my last thought to you before I sleep. In one interlude between the scenes we had a violin solo, Adagio, with soft accompaniment by orchestra. As the fair, tender notes came, they opened . . . like flower-buds expanding into flowers under the sweet rain of the accompaniment: kind Heaven! My head fell on the seat in front, I was utterly weighed down with great loves and great ideas and divine in-flowings and devout out-flowings, and as each note grew and budded and opened, and became a bud again and died into a fresh birth in the next bud-note, *I* also lived these flower-tone lives, and grew and expanded and folded back and died and was born again, and partook of the unfathomable mysteries of flowers and tones.

MACON, GA., *March* 3, 1870.

If the year were an orchestra, to-day would be the calm-passionate, even, intense, quiet, full, ineffable *flute* therein. In this sunshine one is penetrated with flute-tones.

The passion of the struggling births of a thousand spring-germs mingles itself with the peaceful smile of the heavens and with the tender agitations of the air. It

is a mellow *sound*, with a shimmer of *light* trembling through it.

To-day is a prophecy of the New Earth: as . . . Music is a prophecy of another life. To-day floats down Time, as one petal of a Lily on the bosom of a swift stream. Silently it tells, at once, of the gap it has left in the full Lily, and of the ocean whither it drifts to be engulfed, to die, and to live again in other forms.

To-day comes as a friend with some serene, great Joy in his eyes. He whispers his sacred exultation: and will not speak it aloud, for its holiness. . . .

NEW YORK, *August* 15, 1870.

Ah, how they have belied Wagner! I heard Theodore Thomas' orchestra play his overture to "Tannhäuser." The "Music of the Future" is surely thy music and my music. Each harmony was a chorus of pure aspirations. The sequences flowed along, one after another, as if all the great and noble deeds of time had formed a procession and marched in review before one's *ears*, instead of one's *eyes*. These "great and noble deeds" were not deeds of war and statesmanship, but majestic victories of inner struggles of a man. This unbroken march of beautiful-bodied Triumphs irresistibly invites the soul of a man to create other processions like it. I would I might lead a so magnificent file of glories into heaven!

NEW YORK, *August* 15, 1870.

Flutes and Horns and Violins — celestial sighs and breaths slow-drawn, penetrated with that heavenly woe which the deep heart knoweth when it findeth not room in the world for its too-great love, and is worn with fast-



ings for the Beloved: fine Purity, fiercely attacked by palpitating Fascinations, and bracing herself and struggling and fighting therewith, till what is maidenly in a man is become all grimy and sweat-beaded like a warrior: dear Love, shot by some small arrow and in pain with the wound thereof: divine lamentations, far-off blowings of great winds, flutterings of tree and flower leaves and airs troubled with wing-beats of birds or spirits: floatings hither and thither of strange incenses and odors and essences: warm floods of sunlight, cool gleams of moonlight, faint enchantments of twilight: delirious dances, noble marches, processional chants, hymns of joy and of grief: Ah, midst of all these lived I last night, in the first chair next to Theodore Thomas' orchestra.

New York, *September* 24, 1870.

. . . I went at one o'clock to-day to hear Nilsson. She sang in concert at Steinway Hall; t' other artists were Vieuxtemps, the violinist; Wehli, pianist; Brignoli, tenor, and Verger, baritone.

Mlle. Nilsson singeth as thou and I love. She openeth her sweet mouth, and turneth her head o' one side like a mocking-bird in the moonlight, and straightway come forth the purest silver tones that ever mortal voice made. Her pianissimo was like a dawn, which crescendo'd presently into a glorious noon of tone, which then did die away into a quiet gray twilight of clear, melodious whisper. She sang nothing mean, or light, or merely taking. Händel's "Angels Ever Bright and Fair," solo; a duet with Brignoli, by Blangini, and a noble solo, a scena from Ambroise Thomas's "Hamlet" (the insane song of Ophelia), with "Home, Sweet Home" for *encore* — these were all.

Vieuxtemps was unequal. He fired off innumerable crackers, and fired them very skillfully — but made no music save in the mere tone, in which he was very fine.

Wehli is entirely splendid, and played a very beautiful set of concert pieces. Brignoli was too fat, and Verger too lean: which also expresseth their music.

NEW YORK, 1871.

And to-night I come out of what might have been heaven. . . .

'T was opening night of Theo. Thomas' orchestra, at Central Park Garden, and I could not resist the temptation to go and bathe in the sweet amber seas of the music of this fine orchestra, and so I went, and tugged me through a vast crowd, and, after standing some while, found a seat, and the *bâton* tapped and waved, and I plunged into the sea, and lay and floated. Ah! the dear flutes and oboes and horns drifted me hither and thither, and the great violins and small violins swayed me upon waves, and overflowed me with strong lavations, and sprinkled glistening foam in my face, and in among the clarinetti, as among waving water-lilies with flexile stems, I pushed my easy way, and so, even lying in the music-waters, I floated and flowed, my soul utterly bent and prostrate. . . .

NEW YORK, *September* 28, 1871.

I am just come from St. Paul's Church, where I went at eleven this morning, by invitation of Mr. John Cornell, to hear some music composed by him for the organ and trombone; not the old slide-in-and-out trombone, but a sort of baritone *cornet-à-pistons*, of rare, mellow, yet majestic tone. This was played by one of Theo. Thomas'

orchestra. The pieces were a funeral march, a religious air, and a concert piece. Hadst thou been with me to hear these horn-tones, so pure, so noble, so full of confident repose, striking forth the melody in midst of the thousandfold modulations (in which Cornell always runs riot), like a calm manhood asserting itself through a multitude of distractions and discouragements and miseries of life, — hadst thou been there, then how fair and how happy had been my day.

For I mostly have great pain when music, or any beauty, comes past my way, and thou art not by. Perhaps this is because music takes us out of prison, and I do not like to leave prison unless thou goest also.

For in the smile of love my life cometh to life, even as a flower under water gleameth only when the sun-ray striketh down thereon.

San Antonio, Tex., *January* 30, 1873.

Last night at eight o'clock came Mr. Scheidemantel, a genuine lover of music and a fine pianist, to take me to the Maennerchor, which meets every Wednesday night for practice. Quickly we came to a hall, one end of which was occupied by a minute stage with appurtenances, and a piano; and in the middle thereof a long table, at which each singer sat down as he came in. Presently, seventeen Germans were seated at the singing-table, long-necked bottles of Rhine-wine were opened and tasted, great pipes and cigars were all afire; the leader, Herr Thielepape, — an old man with long, white beard and mustache, formerly mayor of the city, — rapped his tuning-fork vigorously, gave the chords by rapid arpeggios of his voice (a wonderful, wild, high

tenor, such as thou wouldst dream that the old Welsh harpers had, wherewith to sing songs that would cut against the fierce sea-blasts), and off they all swung into such a noble, noble old German, full-voiced *lied*, that imperious tears rushed into my eyes, and I could scarce restrain myself from running and kissing each one in turn and from howling dolefully the while. And so . . . I all the time worshipping . . . with these great chords . . . we drove through the evening until twelve o'clock, absorbing enormous quantities of Rhine-wine and beer, whereof I imbibed my full share. After the second song I was called on to play, and lifted my poor old flute in air with tumultuous, beating heart; for I had no confidence in that or in myself. But, *du Himmel!* Thou shouldst have heard mine old love warble herself forth. To my utter astonishment, I was perfect master of the instrument. Is not this most strange? Thou knowest I had never learned it; and thou rememberest what a poor muddle I made at Marietta in playing difficult passages; and I certainly have not practised; and yet there I commanded and the blessed notes obeyed me, and when I had finished, amid a storm of applause, Herr Thielepape arose and ran to me and grasped my hand, and declared that he hat never heert de flude accompany itself pefore! I played once more during the evening, and ended with even more rapturous bravos than before, Mr. Scheidemantel grasping my hand this time, and thanking me very earnestly.

My heart, which was hurt greatly when I went into the music-room, came forth from the holy bath of concords greatly refreshed, strengthened and quieted, and so remaineth to-day. I also feel better than in a long time before. Moreover, I am still master of the flute,

and she hath given forth to me to-day such tones as I have never heard from a flute before.

For these things I humbly thank God.

San Antonio, Texas, *February* 14, 1873.

. . . Last night I went to the party of Colonel W——. I found a very elegant-looking company of ladies and gentlemen — among the most so, General A—— and his daughters — already assembled.

First came some very good concerted pieces for violin and piano, then a piano solo, then a song. Then they called for the flute. I had not played three seconds before a profound silence reigned among the people, seeing which, and dreaming wildly, and feeling somehow in an eerie and elfish and half-uncanny mood, I flew off into all manner of trills, and laments, and cadenza-monstrosities for a long time, but finally floated down into "La Mélancolie" (which, on the violin, ran everybody crazy some weeks ago, here, at a concert), which melted itself forth with such eloquent lamenting that it almost brought my tears — and, to make a long story short, when I allowed the last note to die, a simultaneous cry of pleasure broke forth from men and women that almost amounted to a shout, and I stood and received the congratulations that thereupon came in, so wrought up by my own playing with [hidden] thoughts, that I could but smile mechanically, and make stereotyped returns to the pleasant sayings, what time my heart worked falteringly, like a mouth that is about to cry.

I would there were some other chronicler to tell thee of this success — for I cannot but seem to blow mine own horn therein! — but I know it will give thee pleasure, and therefore, failing others, I tell it thee.

New York, *September* 24, 1873.

. . . On Monday [in Baltimore] my good friend Wysham had the great Mr. Hamerik, director of the Peabody Conservatory of Music, at his house to meet me. . . . Hamerik is one of the first composers in the world . . . (Theodore Thomas has recently brought out his "Nordische Suite" with fine effect) and one of the most accomplished maestros also. So soon as he came, Wysham made me play "Blackbirds." [1] When I finished, Mr. Hamerik expressed himself in such approval as would have delighted thee beyond measure. He declared the composition to be that of an artist, and the playing to be almost perfect, — with a grave and manifestly hearty manner which could not be mistaken — and concluded his applause by telling me that he was endeavoring to persuade the trustees of the Peabody Music Fund to authorize him to organize a full orchestra, in which he begged I would accept the position of first flute. Kind Heaven, how my heart throbbed with delight — for my first thought was of thine enjoyment, when I should at last be able to tell thee that I had received finally, and without any more peradventure, the hearty recognition and approval, both for my composition and for my playing, of one who is regarded as a composer just below the classic Beethoven and Mozart, whose compositions are played along with those of the great masters, and who has been accustomed to hear, and to conduct, the finest music in the world. After

[1] In a letter from San Antonio, of February 28, 1873, Mr. Lanier says: "I have writ the most beautiful piece, 'Field-larks and Blackbirds,' wherein I have mirrored Mr. Field-lark's pretty eloquence so that I doubt he would know the difference betwixt the flute and his own voice."

thus praising my work, Mr. Hamerik went into the library, and wrote me a beautiful letter to Theodore Thomas, not a letter of extravagance, but a few grave, sweet, courteous words; then, coming downstairs, he made me play again the three main movements of "Blackbirds," and testified anew, both while I was playing and when I had finished, his pleasure in the same.

It is, therefore, a *possibility* . . . that I may be first flute in the Peabody Orchestra, on a salary of $120 a month, which, with five flute scholars, would grow to $200 a month, and so . . . we might dwell in the beautiful city, among the great libraries, and midst of the music, the religion, and the art that we love — and I could write my books, and be the man I wish to be.

I do thank God even for this dream.

New York, *October* 6, 1873.

. . . Arriving in town this morning, I rushed over here, to Brooklyn, and went to Mr. M——'s, who took me, by previous arrangement, to play for Mr. S——, the musical critic of a leading New York paper. We arrived at Mr. S——'s in a fierce storm of wind and rain, got in and met Mr. S——, a dapper little young man, supposed to possess supernatural knowledge in the matter of Italian opera, and rejoicing in all manner of souvenirs from the great artists, which he exhibited to us.

I played him "Blackbirds" and the "Swamp Robin," whereat he was greatly stricken, expressing himself in fair terms, and allowing himself to be drawn into as much enthusiasm as was consistent with his Exalted Position. I am to go again, when he will have an entire afternoon; and meantime have left some music

for his sister to practise on the piano. Before I commenced to play we had a triangular talk in which my critic did me the honor to expound some very orthodox theories in regard to the flute, which I straightway proceeded to upset, with all the pleasure in the world, by practical arguments. He was exceedingly kind and polite, and I have to thank Mr. M—— very much for the meeting, which was arranged by Mr. M—— entirely without my knowledge.

BROOKLYN, *October* 10, 1873.

Three days ago I went to Badger's[1] on business, and found there a magnificent great silver Bass-Flute, running down to F below the staff, and on putting it to my lips, drew forth the most ravishing notes I ever heard from any instrument; broad, noble tones, like my fine boy's eyes — whereupon I dilated upon a wind of inspiration, and did breathe out strains thereon in such fashion that the workmen gazed, and grew sympathetic, so that now when I go there they immediately bring me the bass-flute.

BROOKLYN, *October* 15, 1873.

To-day I have been playing a few duos with Mr. Eben . . . then down town, to attend to some financial matters, in the course of which I was waylaid on Wall Street by Mr. ——, who informed me that Miss —— was to be here on Sunday, and that he was proposing to arrange for me to play before her. I don't anticipate

[1] A letter of this date, from Badger to an old customer, says: ". . . Lanier is astonishing. . . . But you ought to hear him play the bass-flute. You would then say, 'Let me pass from the earth with the tones sounding in my ears!' If he could travel with a concert-troupe, and play solos on the bass-flute, I would get orders for fifty in a month. . . ."

much pleasure from the interview, for, from all I can hear of Miss ——, she is fearfully puffed up with conceit, wonderfully wrong-notioned about music (she "does n't like Wagner" — for instance — "there is nothing in his operas for the prima donna to do beyond the other singers;" and she "does n't like Theodore Thomas' orchestra; they can't accompany a singer at all!" and other the like deliverances), and, more than all, despises the flute, having once given Mr. Eben a fearful rebuff, telling him that "she did not care to hear a man pumping wind into a tube!!" Yet, simply for the adventure of the thing, if they do arrange the meeting, I'll go.

Oh, how I can play, with a couple of months' practice! Thou wouldst not know my playing now for that which thou heardst in Marietta. The instrument begins to feel me, to grow lithe under my fingers, to get warmed to life by my kiss, like Pygmalion's stone, and to respond with perfect enthusiasm to my calls. . . .

It is like a soul made into silver. How can the people but respond if I have its exquisite inner-self speaking by my lips!

BROOKLYN, *October* 17, 1873.

. . . I went last night with ——, to hear "Die Zauberflöte." *That* was a mere farce, as indeed was all of it, save the singing of the two *prime donne* and the chorus. Di Murska executed the most wonderful staccatos in the higher register (taking high F at a leap, without an effort), and Lucca made all that *could* be made out of that poor, bald music of Mozart's. Why do we cling so to humbugs? Mozart's music is not to be compared with Schumann's, or Wagner's, or Chopin's, or Mendelssohn's, or Beethoven's. The "magic flute" in this

opera made us laugh, and the sight of the animals (who are supposed to be charmed from their lairs by the tones of the "magic flute") capering about the stage to the poor, thin notes of the poor, thin music was too absurd.

BROOKLYN, *October* 26, 1873.

Yesterday I played duos — some lovely Kuhlau's — with ——. He received me very cordially, and we played very well together; but we will never harmonize *very* intimately, for while he has taste enough to like the best music, yet there is a certain something — a flame, a sentiment, a spark kindled by the stroke of the soul against sorrow, as of steel against flint — which he hath *not*, and the want of which will forever keep him from penetrating into *the deepest* of music. He is warmly enthusiastic, and would have played the whole afternoon with me, but I was obliged to leave, to meet an engagement.

BROOKLYN, *November* 16, 1873.

The orchestra is to be formed — but to last only four months — and each player to get only $60 a month. Yet I am going, without hesitation; for, first, this will occupy but a little time, and, second, I can largely supplement the poor pay in different ways, and, third, it will give me a foothold, which I can likely step from to something better — for the Peabody is a literary as well as a musical institution. . . .

I have had some pleasant musical successes. I played on Wednesday night at a concert in Brooklyn, before some eight hundred people, and made some stir, particularly in the papers — notices whereof I send thee herein. Of course, the talk in these notices about a *début*, the débutant, etc., is simply absurd. . . . I only

played for the fun of it, and by way of feeling the pulse of these audiences in a quiet way (for these little concerts are not ordinarily heard of at all in the newspapers), before venturing to prescribe for the big music-sick patient of New York. When I am ready to come out, which will be after I practise four months in Baltimore, I shall make my *début* under the auspices of the Philharmonic or of Theo. Thomas, or not at all. Meantime, these notices will amuse thee. They are considered wonderfully flattering: so many musicians here work for years and years, and are never heard of at all.

Perhaps the most complete triumph I have had was on last Sunday evening, when I played before an audience of a half-dozen or more of cultivated people. When I had given "Blackbirds" and the "Swamp Robin," the house rose at me. Miss Fletcher declared . . . that I was not only the founder of a school of music, but the founder of American music; that hitherto all American compositions had been only German music done over, but that these were at once American, un-German, classic, passionate, poetic, and beautiful; that I belonged to the Advance Guard, which must expect to struggle, but which could not fail to succeed, with a hundred other things, finally closing with a fervent expression of good wishes, in which all the company joined with such unanimity and fervor that I was in a state of embarrassment, which thou mayst imagine! I wrote her a note the next day, desiring to make some more articulate response than blushes to her recognition, and I have a lovely note from her in reply.[1]

[1] The note referred to ran as follows:—

MR. LANIER,—Once more I am your debtor for a bit of music, your note written is like your note played. If our sincere appre-

On Wednesday I played flute trios with Mr. P—— and Mr. Y——. We sat down to a bound volume of Kuhlau's trios at three o'clock, and played, without leaving our seats, until five. They gave me first flute. . . . I had taken Mr. —— there with me. He could scarcely contain himself — newspaper hack as he is! — as we breathed these miraculous harmonies, and unearthly, dainty melodies, and his great eyes got as deep as the sea, and nigh as moist. Think — Mr. Y——, who has been playing in New York for years, among the very best professional flutists, and who is certainly the best reader I ever saw, says *I* am the best *he* ever saw — I, who, surely as thou knowest, have scarcely read a half-dozen new pieces in any year of my musical life, before this last month or so! How splendid it is. I could never tell thee how I enjoy such things; for it is not I, but always one in whom, for thy sake, I have much interest.

ciation could in any degree make slight return for the delight you gave us, I assure you that our happiness is increased.

Your flute gave me that for which I had ceased to hope, true American Music, and awakened in my heart a feeling of patriotism that I never knew before. Indeed, to put it strongly, America did not seem to be my home except of necessity; my bread and clothes and work were here, and when my soul hungered and thirsted for the Divine inspiration of music, I had to turn away to other lands and worship as it were in a foreign tongue. But when your "Swamp Robin" came upon the wings of melody and piped again his simple lay, he also

> "Sang of what the world will be,
> When the years have passed away:"

and I found worship in my native Land and Tongue.

May God bless your gifts a thousandfold.

Sincerely your friend,

ALICE C. FLETCHER.

November 14, 1873.

BROOKLYN, *November* 17, 1873.

. . . Last night I played at another church concert in New York City, far up town, to a very pleasant audience, with very pleasant testimonials of success. My first piece, a concertino of Briccialdi's . . . brought down the house, in an enthusiastic *encore*, to which I responded with the inevitable "Blue Bells of Scotland." My last piece was the "Swamp Robin," which I only ventured as an experiment. 'T was a curious psychologic study to note how it puzzled most of the audience, and how the few who *did* get into it, began, as it were, to look about them and to say — like a man who has suddenly ridden into a strange and unexpected road — Heigh, heigh! what 's this? Somebody saith every original writer has to educate his readers gradually to himself. How true this is in New York! Here the people are at once the boldest and the timidest in the world. When the new presents itself here, each one waits for the other one to pronounce decisively; of course, at first, no one speaks; finally, some generous and open heart says, this is a good thing; and then straightway all the people join and push the good thing to heaven.

Once give them a start — these singular New Yorkers — and they will go any length.

BROOKLYN, *November* 21, 1873.

. . . I can but [send thee a brief word] this morning telling thee . . . that my Dane, Mr. Hamerik, was in New York two days ago; that, after a long search, we found each other; that he behaved most beautifully and nobly to me, and offered to do everything in the world to make my stay in Baltimore pleasant; and that finally I concluded an engagement with him as *Flauto Primo* in the

Peabody Symphony Orchestra, for four months, commencing on December 1st, prox°. We are to have four rehearsals a week, of two hours each, from 12 to 2 P. M., and one concert each week. This only takes up eleven hours out of the week's time, and gives me a great deal of opportunity to write. I do not get as much pay as I hoped, but I hope to make more with a pupil or two, and then I can finish my darling Jacquerie midst of the great libraries. I am overjoyed at this prospect.

BALTIMORE, *December* 2, 1873.

Well, Flauto Primo hath been to his first rehearsal.

Fancy thy poor lover, weary, worn, and stuffed with a cold, arriving after a brisk walk — he was *so* afraid he might be behind time — at the hall of Peabody Institute. He passeth down betwixt the empty benches, turneth through the green-room, emergeth on the stage, greeteth the Maestro, is introduced by the same to Flauto Secondo, and then, with as much carelessness as he can assume, he sauntereth in among the rows of music-stools, to see if peradventure he can find the place where he is to sit — for he knoweth not, and liketh not to ask. He remembereth where the flutes sit in Thomas' Orchestra; but on going to the corresponding spot he findeth the part of Contra-Basso on the music-stand, and fleeth therefrom in terror. In despair, he is about to endeavor to get some information on the sly, when he seeth the good Flauto Secondo sitting down far in front, and straightway marcheth to his place on the left of the same, with the air of one that had played there since babyhood. This Hamerik of ours hath French ideas about his orchestral arrangements and places his pieces very differently from Thomas. Well, I sit down, some

late-comers arrive, stamping and blowing — for it is snowing outside — and pull the green-baize covers off their big horns and bass-fiddles. Presently the Maestro, who is rushing about, hither and thither, in some excitement, falleth to striking a great tuning-fork with a mallet, and straightway we all begin to toot A, to puff it, to groan it, to squeak it, to scrape it, until I sympathize with the poor letter, and glide off in some delicate little runs; and presently the others begin to flourish also, and here we have it, up chromatics, down diatonics, unearthly buzzings from the big fiddles, diabolical four-string chords from the 'cellos, passionate shrieks from the clarionets and oboes, manly remonstrances from the horns, querulous complaints from the bassoons, and so on. Now the Maestro mounteth to his perch. I am seated immediately next the audience, facing the first violins, who are separated from me by the conductor's stand. I place my part (of the Fifth Symphony of Beethoven, which I had procured two days before, in order to look over it, being told that on the first rehearsal we would try nothing but the Fifth Symphony) on my stand, and try to stop my heart from beating so fast — with unavailing arguments. Maestro rappeth with his *bâton*, and magically stilleth all the shrieks and agonies of the instruments. "Fierst" (he saith, with the Frenchiest of French accents — tho' a Dane, he was educated in Paris) "I wish to present to ze gentlemen of ze orchestra our fierst flutist, Mr. Sidney Lanier, also our fierst oboe, Mr. (I did n't catch his name)." Whereupon, not knowing what else to do — and the pause being somewhat awkward — I rise and make a profound bow to the Reeds, who sit behind me, another to the 'Celli, the Bassi, and the Tympani, in the middle, and a

third to the Violins opposite. This appeareth to be the right thing, for Oboe jumpeth up also, and boweth, and the gentlemen of the orchestra all rise and bow, some of them with great *empressement.* Then there is a little idiotic hum and simper, such as newly introduced people usually affect. Then cometh a man — whom I should always hate, if I *could* hate anybody always — and, to my horror, putteth on my music-stand the flauto primo part of Niels Gade's Ossian Overture, and thereupon the Maestro saith, "We will try *that* fierst." Horrors! They told me they would play nothing but the Fifth Symphony, and this Ossian Overture I have never seen or heard! This does not help my heart-beats nor steady my lips — thou canst believe. However, there is no time to tarry, the *bâton* rappeth, the horns blow, my five bars' rest is out — I plunge.

— Oh! If thou couldst but be by me in this sublime glory of music! All through it I yearned for thee with heart-breaking eagerness. The beauty of it maketh me catch my breath — to write of it. I will not attempt to describe it. It is the spirit of the poems of Ossian done in music by the wonderful Niels Gade.

I got through it without causing any disturbance. Maestro had to stop twice on account of some other players. I failed to come in on time twice in the Symphony. I am too tired now to give thee any further account. I go again to rehearsal to-morrow.

BALTIMORE, *December* 11, 1873.

. . . I send a programme of our concert last Saturday night. It was brilliant, and I failed not — though half-dead with cold, and though called on unexpectedly. I am better to-day. The music lifts me to a heaven of

pain! . . . We are now rehearsing the "Symphonie Fantastique" of Berlioz, which representeth an opium-dream of a love-sick young man. 'T is wonderfully hectic, and parts of it wonderfully beautiful.

BALTIMORE, *December* 21, 1873.

Last night we gave a magnificent concert. The house was crowded. Read the enclosed *carte*, showing the fare we spread before the people . . . [But for loneliness] the music would have been complete, life would have been utterly full, my heart would have bathed itself in a sublime sea of passionate content. The orchestra was inspired, the "Symphonie Fantastique," as difficult and trying a piece of orchestration as was ever written, was played to a marvel. . . . In this "Symphonie" of Berlioz every movement centreth about a lovely melody, repeated in all manner of times and places, which representeth the Beloved of the opium-eating musician. . . . Then, the "Hunt of Henry IV.!" . . . It openeth with a grave and courteous invitation, as of a cavalier riding by some dainty lady, through the green aisles of the deep woods, to the hunt — a lovely, romantic melody, the first violins discoursing the man's words, the first flute replying for the lady. Presently a fanfare; a sweet horn replies out of the far woods; then the meeting of the gay cavaliers; then the start, the dogs are unleashed, one hound gives tongue, another joins, the stag is seen — hey, gentlemen! away they all fly through the sweet leaves, by the great oaks and beeches, all a-dash among the brambles, till presently, bang! goeth a pistol (it was my veritable old revolver loaded with blank cartridge for the occasion, the revolver that hath lain so many nights under my head), fired by *Tympani* (as we

call him, the same being a nervous little Frenchman who playeth our drums,) and then the stag dieth in a celestial concord of flutes, oboes, and violins. Oh, how far off my soul was in this thrilling moment! It was in a rare, sweet glen in Tennessee, the sun was rising over a wilderness of mountains, I was standing (how well I remember the spot!) alone in the dewy grass, wild with rapture and with expectation — yonder came, gracefully walking, a lovely fawn. I looked into its liquid eyes, hesitated, prayed, gulped a sigh, then overcome with the savage hunter's instinct, fired; the fawn leaped convulsively a few yards, I ran to it, found it lying on its side, and received into my agonized and remorseful heart the reproaches of its most tender, dying gaze. But luckily I had not the right to linger over this sad scene; the conductor's *bâton* shook away the dying pause; on all sides shouts and fanfares and gallopings "to the death," to which the first flute had to reply in time, recalled me to my work, and I came through brilliantly.

The Chopin Rondo Concerto, for piano and orchestra, I cannot describe to thee. It nearly killed me with longing . . . [through] the wondrous delicate, yet intense thoughts which pervade it; the "zäl," as Liszt calleth it. Herein the flute hath some lovely replies and dialogues with the piano, in solo, and the horns are exquisitely brought forth.

The songs were not particularly fine, tho' very enjoyable. The Masaniello Overture thou hast, of course, heard before. It was played very brilliantly. To-day Wysham [1] and I played a beautiful *adagio patetico* during the *offertorium* at St. Paul's, the largest church in the city. We had an organ accompaniment, played by

[1] The Second Flute in the Peabody Symphony Orchestra.

a glorious organist, and as the two spirituelle silver tones went stealing and swelling through the great groined arches of the enormous church, I thought I had never heard flute-notes so worthily employed before. The people were greatly pleased, and Wysham was delighted.

I dined with Mrs. Bird to-day. . . . She hath been my constant and true friend, and I shall love her — I know thou wilt also — all my life.

BALTIMORE, *December* 25, 1873.

I am now from St. Paul's Church, where the musicians of our orchestra (among them myself) were engaged to help make the music for the grand services of the day. We were a first violin, viola, 'cello, double-bass, clarionet, French horn, bassoon, two flutes (Wysham and I), and great organ, with a choir of about forty boys and men, and some female voices. The service was nearly three hours long, and music, music, all the time. We opened with the overture to Mozart's "Magic Flute" (which was, I am free to say, a most abominably outré affair for a church service), and then played with the choir throughout the service. This is a wonderfully ritualistic church. A shrine is in front-centre, flanked by two enormous lighted candles, and arched over by a number of smaller ones. Three clergymen and a number of acolytes, boys, etc., assisted in the service. The rector marched in stately fashion down from his dais, the other clergymen, the acolytes, and the choir filed two and two behind him; all marched down into the body of the church, singing a fine chant, then filed to the left, and so went in procession across to a side door, giving into a room in the rear of the church, through which all passed, still sing-

ing. The chant was kept up long after they had disappeared, and the door was shut, and as the voices receded and receded, until finally nothing but the clear treble of the boys could be heard, 't was dramatically very beautiful. Some of the pieces were magnificent, and the crash of the voices and organs and instruments rolled gloriously among the great arches. *All* of them would have been fine, but some of the music . . . was not properly phrased, though containing a few good ideas. Next me sat Mr. G——, first clarionet. Presently the communion service came on; Mr. G—— watched with great curiosity. It was the first one he had ever seen! When he saw the priest blessing the bread, he leaned over to Wysham (who is a devout member of this church) and asked, with great interest: "Does he eat *all* that?" Afterward, when the bread was distributed to the kneeling people, I observed him make gestures of much disgust at the smallness of the portion given to each, and finally he informed Wysham that *that* would not begin to be enough for him! Ah, these heathenish Germans! Double-bass was a big fellow, with a black mustache, to whom life was all a joke, which he expressed by a comical scowl, and Viola was a young Hercules, so full of beer that he dreamed himself in heaven, and Oboe was a young sprig, just out from Munich, with a complexion of milk and roses, like a girl's, and miraculously bright spectacles on his pale blue eyes, and there they sat — Oboe and Viola and Double-bass — and ogled each other, and raised their brows, and snickered behind the columns, without a suspicion of interest either in the music or the service. Dash these fellows, they are utterly given over to heathenism, prejudice and beer — they ought to be annihi-

lated; if they *do* get control of the age, life will be a mere barbaric grab of the senses at whatever there is of sensual good in the world. . . . In the church sometimes, when looking around out of my dream for a moment, I would find . . . only the small choir-boy, who, in default of a music-stand, held up my music for me.

BALTIMORE, MD., *December* 26, 1873.

For this enclosed $25 (and $5 more which I have kept) I have played the first-flute parts in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony; the Ossian overture, the staccato air of the "Magic Flute," the Nordische Suite, the overture to "La Dame Blanche," the "Symphonie Fantastique" of Berlioz, the Mendelssohn Concerto in G minor for piano and orchestra; the "Hunt of Henry IV." overture by Méhul; the Rondo Concerto of Chopin for piano and orchestra, and the overture of Masaniello. If they would only pay me by heart-beats, by agitations, by mental strains, by delights, by agonies, then I would already be grown rich on these aforementioned pieces. They say, however, that I play them very nicely, and that is some reward. . . . To-morrow night we have our second grand concert; the "Symphonie Fantastique," the Méhul overture, the Masaniello overture, the concerto (Rondo) of Chopin (J. N. Pattison, of New York, plays the Piano Forte part); these are all the orchestral pieces. There are, besides, a song from "L'Africaine," with flute obligato which Wysham is to play, and some baritone songs.

BALTIMORE, *January* 3, 1874.

Our concert opened with a symphony of Mozart in G minor. An allegro movement, full of delicious interchanges, betwixt the wind and the strings, comes presently to an abrupt end; then a long *Andante* in six-eight

time, which seems to be a record of sweetest confidences, whispered between the first flute and the first violins, as if they were two young girls just commencing a friendship! and of occasional intrusions of the oboe (as of a girl *de trop*) as well as of sage advice volunteered, here and there, by the elderly bassoons. Finally this conversation ends, and thereunto succeeds a minuet, stately yet coquettish, courteous yet piquant, grave, with the measured steps of dignitaries and of queenly women, yet illumined by the gleam of bright eyes and the flash of silver shoe-buckles. Then the Finale closes all with a great outburst of joy, which breaks out in a thousand lovely phrases of self-repetition, and at last completely and satisfactorily expresses itself.

Then a lady howled dismally a beautiful air from the "Barber of Seville." Then should have come a concerto for oboe with orchestra, but Oboe's lips were chapped; he vowed, until he shook his spectacles off, that he *könnte nicht spielen*, whereupon Maestro Hamerik announced the fact, and announced the further fact that Mr. Sidney Lanier and Mr. Henry Wysham had kindly consented to play a simple melody, in place of the oboe concerto. Then those two gentlemen appeared, and, amidst great applause, advanced to the front. They played "Adieu, Dear Land," S. L. taking first, and H. C. W. skirmishing about as second, Mr. Hamerik palpitating a lovely accompaniment on the piano. Ah, my friend, need I tell thee how the heart of this same S. L. beat along every note of this lovely song, — am I not, too, an exile from my dear Land, which is always the land where my loved ones are? We brought down the house, and responded to a thundering *encore* with "Annie Laurie" (which I hate with all my heart, but Harry liketh it, and we had

not time to discuss). Then came our *pièce de rêsistance*, the "Dream of Christmas" overture, by Ferdinand Hiller. Sweet Heaven — how shall I tell the gentle melodies, the gracious surprises, the frosty glitter of starlight, and flashing of icy *spiculæ* and of frozen surfaces, the hearty chanting of peace and good-will to men, the thrilling pathos of virginal thoughts and trembling anticipations and lofty prophecies, the solemn and tender breathings-about of the coming reign of forgiveness and of love, and the final confusion of innumerable angels flying through the heavens and jubilantly choiring together. . . .

We closed with a grand March of Mendelssohn's, found after his death, and played by us to-night for the first time in this country: the strangest combination of Mendelssohn's most beautiful effects, — particularly of reeds — with a singularly interpolated old Highland-pibroch sort of air in the middle, as if the ghost of the "March of the Cameron Men" were flitting about through the loveliest modern orchestral melodies. . . .

BALTIMORE, *January* 22, 1874.

Aye, Thomas hath played for me: two nights.

I am beginning, in midst of the stormy glories of the orchestra, to feel my heart sure, and my soul discriminating. Not less do I thrill, to ride upon the great surges; but I am growing calm enough to see the star that should light the musician, and presently my hand will be firm enough to hold the helm and guide the ship that way. *Now* I am very quiet; I am waiting. The music of the modern orchestra is greatly defective in the *f*, *ff*, and *fff* passages. When the frenzy of the *finale* comes upon these players of Thomas', for instance, it is

too much a frenzy, the orchestral voices are in each other's way; it is rather a noise, than music. And then the invention of the orchestral composers, since Beethoven, is so poor! We hear so much that we privately forgive, in consideration of some special little strain that we liked, *e. g.*, the Rubenstein piece, "Ivan IV.," to-night. It was, of course, all in the Russian tone; but at least one-half of it was noise. In the midst of the uproar, suddenly a dead silence; then the 'cellos glided into a religious quartette, simple as the open heavens, beautiful beyond description. The proportion between this quartette and the noise was too greatly in favor of the latter.

To see Thomas lead . . . is music itself! His *bâton* is alive, full of grace, of symmetry; he maketh no gestures, he readeth his score almost without looking at it, he seeth everybody, heareth everything, warneth every man, encourageth every instrument, quietly, firmly, marvellously. Not the slightest shade of nonsense, not the faintest spark of affectation, not the minutest grain of *effect* is in him. He taketh the orchestra in his hand as if it were a pen, — and writeth with it.

BALTIMORE, *February* 3, 1874.

Oh, if thou couldst hear a symphony of Gade's which we rehearsed this morning! It is lovely, not with the passionate loveliness that bringeth pain, but with the dainty and childlike, yet strong, loveliness of a mountain (say), all covered with flowers and many-colored rocks, and green leaves, and sparkling springs.

BALTIMORE, *February* 7, 1874.

. . . Randolph's criticism in the "Gazette" on the English and American music was in the main just, —

though of course a little exaggerated, to eke out the spiciness thereof. He and I had a good laugh over it, next morning. I was disappointed in Sterndale Bennett's music. If I had not heard so much better, perhaps I would have enjoyed it; and he does occasionally get off a beautiful idea; but his music is too unsubstantial, you bring nothing with you away from it, it is much like Mendelssohn-and-water. The other pieces of the programme were equally unsubstantial. The overture to "Deborah" was pretty, — nothing more; the "Fugue," by Deems, was a very good fugue, doubtless, but was abominably dismal music; and the march by Rosewald (who is leader of our first violins) was decidedly the best piece on the programme, but was somewhat marred by a palpable imitation of wind-effects in a march of Mendelssohn's we played some weeks ago.

Our concert to-night is to be a very beautiful one in the orchestral features. We are to play the "Fernand Cortez overture," by Spontini, the "Water-Carrier" overture, by Cherubini, the "Fantastic Symphony," by Mercadante, and the "William Tell" overture, by Rossini. This last has a celebrated flute solo, in a beautiful Pastoral Scene, and I have had many compliments on my rendition of it at the rehearsals. I do not think much of it, though: 't is not the sort of playing I like most for the flute, and is more admired for its difficulty, I think, than for its beauty.

—— hath but now brought over a duo for me to practise for next Sunday night. Start not! 'T is a charity concert, and are we not allowed to lift the poor out of the ditch o' Sundays?

BALTIMORE, *February* 7, 1874.

I am just from the concert. It was splendidly successful. The orchestra was in fine trim, the audience in a good-humor, the singing delightful, the piano-playing simply exquisite. The "Tell" overture went off well, save that the 'cellos, which have a beautiful introduction, were not as well harmonized as might be. I had another triumph in the Pastoral Scene. When Oboe and I had finished our long interchange of confidences, the audience broke into applause, which was only stilled by the continuance of the overture, and the Conductor came down and said that it was beautifully played. My greatest trouble in playing has been to keep in tune with the oboe; the tone of that instrument is so strange, so strident, and so indecisive when one is close to the player (he sitteth immediately behind me), that I have infinite difficulty in accommodating my pitch to his. Some of the notes in his instrument, too, are incorrect; and inasmuch as he *cannot* change his tones, and, as my music is often written in octaves above his, I have to use the utmost caution and skill in turning the embouchure in and out, so as to be in perfect accord with him. For some weeks I did not succeed in this, and suffered untold agonies thereanent; but I believe I have now discovered all his quips and his quirks, and to-night we were in lovely harmony with each other.

I read far better than at first, and am greatly improved in the matter of keeping time in the orchestra. How much I have learned in the last two months! I am not yet an artist, though, on the flute. The technique of the instrument has many depths which I had not thought of before, and I would not call myself a

virtuoso within a year. I feel sure that in that time I could do anything possible to the instrument. But thou wouldst not know my tone, now! How I wish I might play for thee! I have just composed a thing I call "Longing." . . . I have not played it for any one, save for myself, when my heart is quite too full. I suspect the people in the house think I am stark mad, in the twilights, when I send this strenuous sigh out on the air. Suppose a tuberose should just breathe itself out in perfume, and disappear utterly in a sweet breath: thus my heart in this melody.

BALTIMORE, *February* 8, 1874.

If the constituents and guardians of my childhood — those good Presbyterians who believed me a model for the Sunday-school children of all time — could have witnessed my acts and doings this day, I know not what groans of sorrowful regret would arise in my behalf. For — the same being Sunday — I went at two o'clock to rehearse with an orchestra in which I was engaged, under Herr Leuschow, for the concert of the Germania Männerchor of Baltimore, which is to be next Wednesday night. I carried with me [somewhat hidden in my heart, whereby] I felt safe and happy. Having arrived at the beautiful new hall which this Männerchor have just built — and the opening of which is the occasion of the concert — I found they were waiting for me, and so quickly took my seat and fell to. First, a Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, by De Beriot, light, lovely, airy and wondrous delicate; then the "Jübel" overture of Weber, full of glory and triumph, ending with "God Save the Queen," which is set in four sharps and carrieth the poor, straining Flauto Primo clear up to



and thereabouts, without pity; then in filed a great chorus of male and female voices, and we all plunged into that great "Athalia" of Mendelssohn for orchestra and chorus. Borne on the noble surges of the up-swelling tones, I floated hither and thither in that sea of glory-turned-into-music. Presently I found myself playing almost alone, in octaves with a lovely soprano voice; I turned my eyes involuntarily, as we sailed along together, and my gaze fell full upon a pair of beautiful liquid, gazelle eyes which, by a similar impulse, I suppose, had sought mine; she — I mean the Eyes — looked me full in the face for a moment, then with a half-smile, full of dignity and sweetness, turned to her notes again: which also I had to do, not having seen or heard the piece before, and so, mutually cheered by this dumb exchange of sympathy, we sang and played together to the end of the piece, which occupied, I should think, near three-quarters of an hour. When we had finished I rushed to Herr Leuschow and procured a presentation to the fair Soprano. I found her a charming young woman, bright-faced and witty, . . . and had a little, really refreshing, champagny talk with her. . . . Then we played a cavatina from "Ernani," sung by a stout German lady; then the "Sonnenuntergang" by Flamma, for chorus of men's voices and orchestra.

Then I took a great draught of beer, and found it was six o'clock. I had had nothing to eat since eight this morning: so hied me to a restaurant, and dined on oys-

ters and a chop. Then home, laid me down for twenty minutes, rose, dressed in full concert-suit, and went forth with —— to the great hall of the Masonic Temple. Here we found a large audience assembled to hear a concert for the benefit of the Carmelite Nuns, and being quickly called, forth stepped the little man and I on the stage, and dashed into the elaborate tootle-ty-tootle-ty of Rabboni's duo on themes from "Rigoletto." I did laugh inwardly, as I looked about the hall, to see the big Irishmen, servant-maids and all, good Catholics every one, gazing and listening, rapt. They encored us, and we responded with "Adieu, Dear Land."

Then, home, and here sit I . . . famished for . . . my highest-of-life. . . .

Bohemianism and compliments fill not my heart.

BALTIMORE, *February* 12, 1874.

. . . To offset this Jeremiad, I may tell thee that from a hundred indications I gather that I have conquered myself a place here as an orchestral player. The prejudices, the cliques, the claques, the difficulties I had to encounter were innumerable and appalling; but by straightforward behavior and hard work and steady improvement, I have finally managed to beat down and trample on every one of them. I believe my "Tell" solo, on Saturday night, quite gave the *coup de grâce* to them, and the managers of the smaller orchestras about town have freely proffered engagements for odd occasions, although I do not belong to the "Musical Union," which embraceth nearly all the musicians in town, and which obligeth all its members to employ each other in preference to outsiders. I played last night with the Germania Männerchor Orchestra; next

week I am to play with the Liederkranz; and have four other engagements of similar character. I was also engaged to play solos in two concerts at Wheeling, Va.; but this has been postponed until after Lent; . . . and the leader of the Harmonic Männerchor has engaged me for a solo at their next concert, the date of which is not yet determined.

I am copying off — in order to try the publishers therewith — a *Danse des Moucherons* (midge-dance), which I have written for flute and piano, and which I think enough of to let it go forward as Op. 1. Dost thou remember one morning last summer, Charley and I were walking in the upper part of the yard, before breakfast, and saw a swarm of gnats, of whose strange evolutions we did relate to thee a marvellous tale? I have put the grave oaks, the quiet shade, the sudden sunlight, the fantastic, contrariwise, and ever-shifting midge-movements, the sweet hills afar off, . . . all in the piece, and thus *I* like it; but I know not if others will, I have not played it for anybody.

BALTIMORE, *April* 3, 1874.

I am just come from Venice, . . . and have strolled home through the moonlight, singing serenades. . . .

— In plain terms, — sweet Heaven, how I do abhor these same plain terms — I have been playing "Stradella" (in the orchestra at the Concordia Theatre), and I am full of gondellieds, of serenades, of balconies with white arms leaning over the balustrades thereof, of gleaming waters, of lithe figures in black velvet, of stinging-sweet coquetries, of diamonds, daggers, and desperadoes.

Truth to say, the performance was but indifferent good, saving a lovely tenor; but I had never heard the

opera before, and I cannot tell thee the intense delight which these lovely conceptions of Flotow gave me. The man has put Venice, lovely, romantic, wicked-sweet Venice, into music, and the melodies breathe out an eloquence that is at once honied and spicy, at once sentimental and powerful, at once languid and thrilling. . . .

BALTIMORE, *April* 9, 1874.

. . . Last night I won [from music] much glory, playing thy sonata of Kuhlau (which thou broughtest me from Savannah) to the most critical audience in town, — *viz.*, at a private concert of the Germania Club.

I have now to rush down to the Concordia, to rehearse with an orchestra there. To-night I am going to play that lovely serenade which we heard at Theodore Thomas' concert in Macon — for flute and French horn. I play it with a noble 'cellist, the horn part having been arranged for violoncello. I also play first flute to-night in the orchestra which is to accompany the Liederkranz in bringing out Mendelssohn's "Forty-second Psalm."

NEW YORK, *September* 3, 1874.

I think I have invented a flute which will go down to G below the staff, and which will entirely remedy the imperfections that now exist in that part of the flute that extendeth below D. I have stirred up Badger about it — with infinite labor, for the old Satyr is far more concerned about silver dollars than about silver flutes, and is almost inexpugnably conservative. He is always wonderfully kind to me, however, and gazes on me with a half-amused smile when I am talking, as if I were a precocious child whom he was showing off. I have some good hopes of the new flute. O . . . dream

with me that some day we will listen to an orchestra in which shall be as many first flutes as first violins, and as many second flutes as second violins!

And why should it not be so? What reason is there in the nature of things why the violins should be the orchestra, and the flutes and other instruments mere adjuncts? I say this not out of any foolish advocacy of the flute: thou knowest I love the violin with my whole soul. No, I speak in advocacy of pure music. No one can hear an orchestra constituted like Thomas' (*e. g.*) without being convinced that, with all its perfection of handling, its material is *not* perfect. The *Tutti* in *fff* is always a grief to me. I defy any musician to extract anything out of such passages unless he have the score before him, or is otherwise familiar with the theme. Then he can faintly discern the idea: but to those who are not musicians it is as sound and fury, signifying nothing. . . .

BROOKLYN, *September* 7, 1874.

. . . Badger worked for me like a Trojan all Saturday afternoon, experimenting on my new long flute. We were much put to it for some time to get a certain motion that was essential; but I kept him at it, in spite of the most dismal croaking on his side, until our efforts were crowned with brilliant success. I am going over now to recommence work on it. . . .

September 17, 1874.

. . . The long flute is nearly done, and I think it will work. It hath revealed sundry hitches which have taxed my ingenuity severely, but I have managed to overcome them all, and the final prospect is now good.

September 21, 1874.

. . . The long flute will succeed, in time. It is near enough finished for me to see that. Dost thou know, everything I do or write is so new and upturn-y of old mouldy ideas, here, that I have infinite trouble. *E. g.*, old Badger has been making flutes for forty years, and when any luckless wight maketh suggestion to him thereanent, he smileth a battered and annihilating smile, which saith plainly enough, *Pooh*, I exhausted all that a half-century ago. Now this Satyr fought me at every stage and up every step of my long flute. He declared in the very beginning that it was impossible: that a tube so long could not be filled by the human breath, that a column of air so long could not be made to vibrate, etc., and that he had long ago tried it thoroughly, and satisfied himself it was physically non-achievable. This last, of course, staggered me; yet with foolhardiness (as it is called) I worked at him until I got him to draw out a long tube, upon which in a few minutes I demonstrated to him that the G was not only a possible but a beautiful note. He then retreated to his second line, and entrenched himself behind the C-key, averring that a key could not be constructed which would make C and at the same time hold down the four keys of the right hand. Then I proved to him it could be done, by good logic, and he finally made the key I wanted and it *was* done. Thus from breastwork to breastwork hath he been driven; in three days more I expect him to surrender at discretion. . . .

September 25, 1874.

. . . I am going to move heaven and earth for ways and means to take lessons from Dr. Damrosch, who is

leader of the Arion Society and of the Oratorio Society of New York and of the Händel and Haydn Society of Brooklyn. He is a beautiful violinist, and is considered at the head of fine music in New York. A slender, blue-eyed man, with a broad forehead, is he; and a man of culture withal. . . .

BROOKLYN, *October*, 1874.

. . . On Tuesday I went by invitation to P——'s rooms to play flute quartettes. They made me take the first part, and placed before me a terribly difficult quartette of Walckier's, which I had never seen before. I could never tell how beautiful it was: such long-drawn chords with sweet thoughts in them, like flowers hid in green leaves. I went through it in a great ecstasy, without a break. When we finished, P—— cried out to me, "Well, sir, you are the best sight-reader I ever saw; H—— would have broken down at every second bar." Thou wouldst be greatly pleased to know how greatly I have improved in this particular, by a little practice in it, which I have just had for the first time in my life. During the past two weeks L—— has been coming twice a week to my room, and playing for an hour old-fashioned duos which I never saw before. This has set me up greatly in reading. Last night Mme. A—— gave a little musicale, in order that Dr. C——, an amateur flutist, of Brooklyn, might hear me play. He brought a lot of music wholly new to me, and, although embarrassed at playing at sight before so many people, and with an accompanist who was also reading at sight, I went through in grand style, amidst such showers of applause and of compliments as quite reddened my face. . . .

New York, *Sunday, October* 18, 1874.

I have been in my room all day; and have just concluded a half-dozen delicious hours, during which I have been devouring, with a hungry ferocity of rapture which I know not how to express, "The Life of Robert Schumann," by his pupil, von Wasielewski. This pupil, I am sure, did not fully comprehend his great master. I think the key to Schumann's whole character, with all its labyrinthine and often disappointing peculiarities, is this: That he had no mode of self-expression, or, I should rather say, of self-expansion, besides the musical mode. This may seem a strange remark to make of him who was the founder and prolific editor of a great musical journal, and who perhaps exceeded any musician of his time in general culture. But I do not mean that he was confined to music for self-expression, though indeed, the sort of critical writing which Schumann did so much of is not at all like poetry in its tranquillizing effects upon the soul of the writer. What I do mean is that his sympathies were not *big* enough, he did not go through the awful struggle of genius, and lash and storm and beat about until his soul was grown large enough to embrace the whole of life and the All of things, that is, large enough to appreciate (if even without understanding) the magnificent designs of God, and tall enough to stand in the trough of the awful cross-waves of circumstance and look over their heights along the whole sea of God's manifold acts, and deep enough to admit the peace that passeth understanding. This is, indeed, the fault of all German culture, and the weakness of all German genius. A great artist should have the sensibility and expressive genius of Schumann, the calm grandeur of Lee, and the human breadth of Shakespeare, all in one.

Now in this particular, of being open, unprejudiced, and unenvious, Schumann soars far above his brother Germans; he valiantly defended our dear Chopin, and other young musicians who were struggling to make head against the abominable pettiness of German prejudice. But, withal, I cannot find that his life was great, as a whole: I cannot see him caring for his land, for the poor, for religion, for humanity: he was always a restless soul; and the ceaseless wear of incompleteness finally killed, as a maniac, him whom a broader Love might have kept alive as a glorious artist to this day.

The truth is, the world does not require enough at the hands of genius. Under the special plea of greater sensibilities, and of consequent greater temptations, it excuses its gifted ones, and even sometimes makes "a law of their weakness." But this is wrong: the sensibility of genius is just as much greater to high emotions as to low ones; and whilst it subjects to stronger temptations, it at the same time interposes — if it *will* — stronger considerations for resistance.

These are scarcely fair things to be saying *apropos* of Robert Schumann: for I do not think he was ever guilty of any excesses of genius — as they are called: I only mean them to apply to the *unrest* of his life.

— And yet, for all I have said, how his music does burn in my soul! It stretches me upon the very rack of delight; I know no musician that fills me so full of heavenly anguish, and if I had to give up all the writers of music save one, my one should be Robert Schumann.

— Some of his experiences cover some of my own as aptly as one-half of an oyster-shell does the other half. Once he went to Vienna — that gay New York of Austria; and he writes back to his sister Theresa: —

". . . So my plans have as yet progressed but little. The city is so large that one needs double time for everything. . . . But to tell you a secret, I should n't like to live here long, and *alone;* serious men and Saxons are seldom wanted or understood here. . . . In vain do I look for musicians; that is, musicians who not only play passably well upon one or two instruments, but who are cultivated men, and understand Shakespeare and Jean Paul. . . . I might relate all this at full length. But I don't know how the days fly, here; I 've been here three months to-day; and the post-time, four o'clock, is always just at hand. . . . Clara goes the first of January to Paris, and probably to London later. We shall then be far apart. Sometimes I feel as if I could not bear it. But you know the reason: she wants to make money, of which we are indeed in need. May the good God guard her, the good, faithful girl!"

NEW YORK, *October* 29, 1874.

To-day I played for the great Dr. Damrosch; and won him. I sang the "Wind-Song" to him. When I finished he came and shook my hand, and said it was done like an artist: that it was wonderful, in view of my education; and that he was greatly astonished and pleased with the poetry of the piece and the enthusiasm of its rendering. He then closed the door on his next pupil, and kept him waiting in the front parlor a half hour, while giving me a long talk. I had told him that I wished to pursue music. He said: "Do you know what that means? It means a great deal of work, it means a thousand sacrifices. It is very hazardous."

I replied, I knew all that: but it was not a matter of

mere preference, it was a spiritual necessity, I must be a musician, I could not help it.

This seemed to please him; and he went on to speak as no other musician here *could* speak, of many things. He is the only poet among the craft here; and is a thoroughly cultivated man, in all particulars. He offered to do all he could in my behalf; and was altogether the gentleman and the wise artist.

Thou wilt share with me the pleasure I take in thinking that I have never yet failed to win favor with an artist. Although I am far more independent of praise than formerly, and can do without it perfectly well: yet, when it comes, I keenly enjoy it; particularly from one who is the friend of Liszt, of Von Bülow, and of Wagner.

Moreover, I played abominably: being both tired, weakened by the warm weather, and excited.

I am pleased that Hamerik should have so cordially invited me back to my old place; and anticipate a winter in Baltimore full of substantial work. I find I need thorough-bass sorely, and am studying it with might and main.

BROOKLYN, November 8, 1874.

. . . I have spent the whole Sunday in my room, in reading, with slow labor — for my German is but limited — Wagner's "Rhein-Gold," the first part of his great Trilogy, or rather Tetralogy — for it has four parts — which I am going to translate unless some happy mortal gets ahead of me. The conception is very fine; but there is something in it, or rather something *not* in it, which I detect in everything that any German has yet done in the way of music or poetry. I know not exactly

what to call it, or indeed how to define it. It is that (if I may express it in a very roundabout way) sentiment lying deep in the heart of the author which would produce on his face a quiet, wise smile all the while he was writing, a sort of consciousness underlying all his enthusiasms (which are not at all weakened thereby), that God has charge, that the world is in His hands, that any bitterness is therefore small and unworthy of a poet. This was David's frame of mind; it was also Shakespeare's. No German has approached it except perhaps Richter. . . .

1874.

. . . The great deeps, the wild heights, the passionate cities, the happy vales, the dear secret springs, the broad and generous-bosomed rivers, the manifold exquisite flowers, the changeful seasons, the starry skies, the present, the past, the future . . . of the world of music: into these he hath not been, into these will he never enter. But he hath not one infinitely sweet to present ever before him the glorious ideal of his youth, to keep him ever trustful in the brightness and reality and sufficiency of love, to hold him ever self-watchful and solicitous to be all that is high and manly and noble, in order to maintain himself in some way worthy of his unapproachable Beloved.

Baltimore, January 3, 1875.

Doth not this enclosed programme show a feast of glory? And how we did play it! We were forty-four in Orchestra, and we all played as if our soul's welfare hung on each note. How *can* I tell thee the heaven of it, to me?

Then, after the concert, Mr. Sutro and his wife in-

vited Hamerik, Seifert (leader of the violins, just from Berlin), Wysham, and myself to take champagne with them at their rooms, where we sat until far into the morning, talking music.

My playing is greatly improved; and my flute now fits upon the oboe like the down upon a peach.

My head is all full of my "Gnat-dance," which I am going to turn into a symphony, for orchestra with flute *obligato*.

BALTIMORE, January 6, 1875.

. . . I had a long talk to-day with Mr. Uhler, Librarian of the Peabody. He tells me that there is a full set of apparatus for the Physics of Music lectures now at the Institute, and that they are not even unpacked! I have the strongest hope of being able to accomplish my project anent the establishment of such a chair in connection with the Conservatory. I am working hard at all the books I can find in the library on the subject, and I am going over in a few moments to spend the balance of the evening there.

BALTIMORE, January 9, 1875.

. . . Our second concert comes off to-night, and we are to play such beautiful music as makes my heart tremble even to think of. First comes Beethoven's Second Symphony, one written before the dreadful deafness had come upon his ears and pierced into his heart. The whole three movements are ravishing melodies from beginning to end, and the second movement, a Larghetto, is as if the wind instruments and strings were having a game of Hide-and-Seek in Heaven. Then Mme. De Ryther, a lady in form and manner and stage-appearance much like our dear departed G——, is to

sing, with a glorious contralto voice, a noble aria from Händel's little-known opera, "Rinaldo." Then we play Bernhard Scholz's overture, "Im Freien" ("In the free air"), an exquisite embodiment of tender sky, of birds, of joyful green leaves and lush grasses and brilliant flowers. Then we have some English songs by Mme. De Ryther, and conclude all with Karl Reinecke's lovely Overture to Calderon's "Dame Kobold."

BALTIMORE, *January* 12, 1875.

I have a nice piano just arrived. . . . I found I could not write my Gnat Symphony without it. I am going to put into the slow movement of the Gnat Symphony my No. 1 which thou didst admire so long ago: taking the melody first for the flute, then for the violins. The melody seems fairly ravishing to me.

. . . The fury of creation is on me to-day, and I am now going down for some score-paper, and to mail this . . . then to the pen.

Hamerik is interested in the chair of physics, and will take me to see Mr. E——, who is chief among the trustees in the Conservatory department. . . .

BALTIMORE, *January* 20, 1875.

On Monday night came Hamerik to spend the evening with me. At seven came he; and at 2 A. M. left he. Such another music-talk have I never had. The fellow is a rare genius: his music is the most poetic subtlety of tone-combination that could be imagined.

BALTIMORE, *January* 24, 1875.

Our concert last night was magnificently successful.

Our first number was the greatest of modern works, the Symphony by Svendsen. The third movement is a

long and intricate Scherzo, of indescribable lightness and beauty; and is, throughout, a solo for the first flute, supported by a multitudinous accompaniment of the reeds and strings. The instant we had finished, the audience furiously demanded an *encore*, the Director smiled his congratulations over upon me, and we plunged into it again, like a flock of butterflies drunk with sunlight swooping upon a flower-bed.

The whole Symphony gave me immeasurable delight. I am so much improved now in playing, that I can preserve my internal dignity in great measure free from the dreadful distractions of solicitude, and thus my soul revels in the midst of the heaven of these great symphonic works with almost unobstructed freedom. . . .

I believe I have had the good fortune to discover a very curious fact in relation to the vibration of strings, which will exert an important influence in explaining the difference of *timbre* between stringed instruments and wind; and perhaps in other directions which I have not had time to think toward. I have communicated the substance of the proposition to Professor F. H. Smith of the University of Virginia, — a very eminent authority in such matters, — and he replies that my idea is unquestionably correct.[1] . . .

[1] Professor Smith wrote: —

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, *January* 21, 1875.

MY DEAR SIR, — I think there can be no doubt that your proposition is correct. I would prefer a slightly different enunciation of it. Calling the excursion of the string from one side to the other a semi-vibration, I would say, "Every transverse vibration of a tense string must necessarily originate four longitudinal semi-vibrations of the same string." The reason for the change is this: that while the transverse vibration presents all the phases of such a motion, the longitudinal disturbance includes only such phases as belong to dilatation. A complete longitudinal wave

BALTIMORE, *February* 7, 1875.

. . . Our concert last night — whereof I send the beautiful programme — was brilliantly successful. We had only rehearsed the Mozart Concerto once, Mr. Hoffman not arriving until Friday; but it went off nobly, on the part of the orchestra, and Mr. Hoffman played it with a subtle delicacy of touch and of expression of which I had never dreamed him capable. The Proch variations were sung charmingly by Miss Thursby, I standing with her and playing the flute obligato: all with such effect that I had twice to lead her back in response to vociferous *encores*. The third movement of the Hiller symphony was full of lovely flute-effects; and my playing won me many compliments from the stolid Germans of the orchestra.

BALTIMORE, *February* 26, 1875.

Well then, installment No. 1 shall relate to thee in how wholly unorthodox a manner — yet to me how devout! — I spent last Sunday. . . .

At half-past ten I was ready for action, and proceeded to meet my colleagues of the wind quintette — with whom I was to play at the concert that night — for the

embraces both a tract of condensation and one of rarefaction. In the present instance the longitudinal effect consists of a series of semi-waves, all of the same kind, *viz.*, dilatation.

A very pretty illustration of your proposition is found in Melde's expt., in which a string properly stretched is fastened to one of the tines of a tuning-fork, and excited to transverse vibration by the vibration of the latter. To produce the same vibration in the string, the tuning-fork must make twice as many vibrations per second, when put in the position A [where the two tines are in a line with the string], as are required when it is put in the position B [where a line between the two tines is at right angles to the string]. That is, fork A must be an octave above fork B.

Very truly yours, FRANCIS H. SMITH

rehearsal of our piece; which, by reason of short notice and of the exactions of our orchestra rehearsals, we had not been able to rehearse before. This occupied until after one o'clock, when I rushed back to my room, made some changes of toilet, and repaired to the P——s', where I was promised to dinner. After dinner, Mr. P—— and I looked over a magnificent bound collection of colored prints representing the progress of Art in all times and countries: till half-past five, when I returned to my room, fell on the bed and rested an hour; then tea; then a hasty arrayal in dress-coat and white tie, and a flight to the Germania Hall where we were to play the quintette. Which having played, I rushed, at nine o'clock, to the house of M. Rabillon, where I had been engaged to play in a string quintette of Haydn for three strings, flute, and piano; Mme. Rabillon playing the piano part, and her daughter playing the violoncello part. Arriving here, found the violin and the viola men had not come: so played trios with mother and daughter (violoncello, flute, and piano), and chatted with the father until eleven, then took leave of these charming, cultivated, unaffected, simple-mannered French people, and got me home to bed, tired as thou mayst imagine.

Of course, this was an exceptional Sunday. I usually spend the day, until dinner-time, in my room, writing to thee, and meditating upon God. I then dine at Mrs. Bird's, and spend my evening alone in my room, bringing my life up. . . .

BALTIMORE, *February* 28, 1875.

. . . We had a beautiful concert last night: the Seventh Symphony of Beethoven, the great concerto of

Schumann for piano and orchestra, the "Marriage of Figaro;" winding up with the dreary old "Good-Night" Symphony of Haydn, in which each of us had a candle attached to his stand (the hall being in total darkness), which he blew out as his part was finished (the parts came to an end successively), until finally naught was left but a lonesome old fiddler who dismally sawed away, but at last left, the leader beating time for a few bars longer, then sadly blowing out his solitary candle and moving away.

BALTIMORE, *March* 12, 1875.

. . . I have so many fair dreams and hopes about music in these days. It is a gospel whereof the people are in great need. As Christ gathered up the ten commandments and re-distilled them into the clear liquid of that wondrous eleventh — Love God utterly, and thy neighbor as thyself — so I think the time will come when music, rightly developed to its now-little-foreseen grandeur, will be found to be a later revelation of all gospels in one. Only think how it is beginning to do the people's worship in the churches, here, of late!

I was at one the other day where half of the service was music, and if the man at the organ had been at all a preacher in soul (alas! he was not), he would have dealt out the far heavenlier portion of the doctrine. . . .

BALTIMORE, *March* 18, 1876.

I have just come from the last concert, whereof I send thee herein a programme. A certain sense of melancholy is upon me — the last of anything is *per se* not joyful — but I quite kill it with the thought that I am now entirely free . . . as soon as I have finished my

Centennial Ode.[1] I do not know how soon this will be. It *ought* to be in the hands of the printers and engravers early in April, but it has been so much interrupted by illness and a thousand little extraneous matters, that I fear it will be late. However, the God of the humble poet is very great, and I have had so many signal instances of His upholding grace that I do not now ever quite despair of anything.

Thomas is to be here next Wednesday, and I hope then to have some final report from him as to whether he will be able to put in another flute upon his orchestra.

I have received a copy of the piano score of the Cantata, which I will send on Monday. . . . The poem appears on the first page in connected shape, as well as in its proper place along with the music. This piano score is only written for the purpose of drilling the chorus; the full orchestra score will soon be printed, and I will then send thee a copy of that. . . . I am continually and increasingly amazed at the intense rate of life at which I have to live here. There is never a moment when I have what could be called leisure: a duty of some sort is always ready, I am always pressed for time, and that too at the total neglect of scores of visits which I ought to pay here. I do not even have time to think out why it is so.

I hope thou wilt like my dactyls; I am greatly interested in them. . . . If I were only fresh to write this poem! but it is done with a laggard spirit.

After a concert, not dated.

. . . The great Beethoven concerto, the Mendelssohn concerto (for violin and orchestra), the "Wolfram's Song,"

[1] "The Psalm of the West," for Lippincott's Magazine.

these will kill me if I do not hear them some day [as I would] ! I dare not talk about them more. There was the largest audience ever assembled in that hall. Even the aisles were crowded with ladies, standing. . . .

How well I now understand the foundation which music has, in the culture of the soul ! A broad and liberal spirit wielding the *bâton* to-night could have set the hearts of fifteen hundred people a-fire. As it was, they were (merely) greatly pleased.

There is a certain heaven in store for me : it is to play with thine accompaniment, some day, certain songs out of a "Schubert Album" which I have. Oh, if thou couldst hear the passion, the melodious eloquence, the pleading pathos wherewith my dear Silvertongue[1] rendereth these !

PHILADELPHIA, *May* 28, 1876.

To-day . . . I had an invitation from Wehner to come and spend the morning with him. I went at half-past ten, flute in hand. His knowledge of English is even less than mine of German, and we wasted not a word in talk beyond the usual salutations, but went immediately to our matters, by a delightful plunge into a volume of Kuhlau's duos which I had not before seen. We were in a cool, retired parlor, the morning was sweet, there was no third person in the room, the music was of the simple, grave, religious character of Bach's, and my heart was all a-cry. At the end of each movement, as we played straight through the book, my big, phlegmatic,

[1] A silver Boehm flute, in one long tube, which Mr. Lanier played for a time. He finally returned to the wooden Boehm, having a mouthpiece of ivory inserted to procure greater resonance.

square-built German cried "Gut!" and looked meaningly upon me; I said "Wunderschön," and looked meaningly upon him; and at the end of two hours I made a hasty *adé* with a full heart, and came back to the Peacocks' for dinner.

Letters between two Poets:
Bayard Taylor and Sidney Lanier

Letters between two Poets: Bayard Taylor and Sidney Lanier

THESE letters are the formal record of the friendship between two poets; and while the self-evident reason for putting them before the public must lie in the discussions they contain on matters of literary art, there is a rather special human interest in the relation which called them forth. For this was a friendship which did not mature slowly, restrained by the cautious prudence of alert self-consciousness, but sprang at once into full, generous, and whole-hearted existence, as if aware how brief a time were allotted it.

In the Letters to Mr. Gibson Peacock,[1] the circumstances which brought about the first epistolary acquaintance appear in detail. Mr. Gibson Peacock, editor of the Philadelphia "Evening Bulletin," and a warm friend and admirer of Mr. Lanier, had sent the younger poet's newly published "Symphony" to Mr. Taylor; and when the latter's hearty appreciation of this poem reached the author, it called forth the letter which inaugurated their friendship and a correspondence that lasted, almost without a break, until Mr. Taylor's death. Since this correspondence is practically complete (with the exception of a few extracts that appear in the "Life and Let-

[1] Chapter I.

ters of Bayard Taylor"), the text has been allowed to explain itself, with no elucidating comment save in one or two instances.

It should be remembered that at this time Bayard Taylor had been a very prominent figure in the literary world for over twenty-five years. As author, translator, traveller, diplomatist and lecturer, his position had long been assured; four years before, his twenty or thirty previous volumes had culminated in that great translation of "Faust" which is in itself a literary heritage that any man might consider sufficient for a life work. Sidney Lanier's name, on the contrary, was almost unknown. Only a few months before had appeared the first poem which brought him any general recognition,[1] and his opening letter expresses his deep sense of generous and sympathetic appreciation from the older man, whose own battle with Obscurity was but a dim memory.

Early in August, 1875, Mr. Lanier made a trip to New York, and his first letter is from Brooklyn: —

195 Dean St., Brooklyn, N. Y., *August* 7, 1875.

My dear Sir: When a man, determined to know as well what is under as what is above, has made his plunge down to the bottom of the great Sea Doubtful of poetic endeavor and has looked not only upon the enchanted caverns there but upon the dead bodies also, there comes a moment, as his head re-emerges above the surface, when his eyes are a-blink with salt water and tears, when the horizon is a round blur, and when he wastes strength that might be applied to swimming

[1] "Corn," in Lippincott's Magazine for February, 1874.

in resolutely defying what seems to be the gray sky overhead.

In such a moment, a friendly word — and all the more if it be a friendly word from a strong swimmer whom one perceives far ahead advancing calmly and swiftly — brings with it a pleasure so large and grave that, as voluble thanks are impossible, so a simple and sincere acknowledgment is inevitable.

I did not know that my friend Mr. Peacock had sent you my "Symphony" until I received his letter enclosing yours in reference to that poem: your praise came to me, therefore, with the added charm of surprise. You are quite right in supposing the Makamât of Hariri of Basra to be unknown to me. How earnestly I wish that they might be less so, by virtue of some account of them from your own lips! I could never describe to you what a mere drought and famine my life has been, as regards that multitude of matters which I fancy one absorbs when one is in an atmosphere of art, or when one is in conversational relation with men of letters, with travellers, with persons who have either seen, or written, or done large things. Perhaps you know that, with us of the younger generation in the South since the War, pretty much the whole of life has been merely not-dying.

I will be in Brooklyn about a month; and if you should come to New York in that time I beg you will send me a line to above address, telling me where I can find you, and *when*, so that I may not miss you.

I remember how Thomas Carlyle has declared a man will be strengthened in his opinion when he finds it shared by another mortal; and so enclose a slip which a friend has just sent me, from the Boston "Transcript,"

containing some pleasant words about my poems by Mr. Calvert.

Pray believe that I shall always hold myself, and always rejoice to be held by you, as

Your friend, SIDNEY LANIER.

BOSTON, *August* 17, 1875.

MY DEAR SIR: I find your letter here, awaiting my return from New Brunswick. I am exceedingly glad that you are to remain for a month, because now I can be sure of seeing you — although not immediately, as I should wish, were I absolute master of my days.

I go from here to Penn'a for a week, but shall return to New York on the 28th, to attend the celebration of Goethe's 126th birthday, and shall then be nearly a week, alone and idle, at my residence, No. 31 West 61st St., where I beg you will come, say on Sunday the 29th, after which we can arrange how to meet again. Or, if you desire to attend the Goethe celebration — Bryant gives the address and my unlucky self the ode — please send me a line to *Kennett Square, Penn'a*, and I can easily get an invitation for you from the Goethe Association.

I write hurriedly, finding much correspondence awaiting me here, — so can only repeat how much joy the evidence of a new, *true* poet always gives me — such a poet as I believe you to be. I am heartily glad to welcome you to the fellowship of authors, so far as I may dare to represent it; but, knowing the others, I venture to speak in their names also. When we meet, I hope to be able to show you, more satisfactorily than by these written words, the genuineness of the interest

which each author always feels in all others; and perhaps I may be also able to extend your own acquaintance among those whom you have a right to know.

Excuse this hurried scrawl, and believe me, most sincerely

Your friend, BAYARD TAYLOR.

195 DEAN ST., BROOKLYN, N. Y., *August* 19, 1875.

DEAR MR. TAYLOR: It would give me a great pleasure to hear you read your Goethe ode, and — though trembling a little at the idea of giving trouble to a busy man — I cannot resist the temptation to avail myself of your kind offer to intercede for an invitation.

I thank you for the fair words your letter brings, and am always

Your friend, SIDNEY LANIER.

KENNETT SQUARE, PENN., *August* 23, 1875.

DEAR MR. LANIER: Passing through New York, I met the President of the Committee of Arrangement for the Goethe-Festival, and he informed me that a box for six persons would be placed at my disposal. Now, as my literary friends are separately provided for, and there is a possibility of my wife, only, needing a seat, I have thus a seat (or *two*, if Mrs. Lanier is with you) ready. If any tickets for the six box-seats are sent to me, I will forward two at once: if not, the best thing will be for you to come to my quarters — No. 31 West 61st St. — by 7 o'clock, next Saturday evening. At Fulton Ferry ask for the "Belt Railroad," which follow to the junction of 59th St. and 9th Avenue. Go up 9th Avenue to 61st St. — two short blocks — and No. 31 is the second door *East*, north side. It will take you about an hour,

from Fulton Ferry. I know of no other practicable way of meeting you on that evening, as I cannot leave here until Saturday, and shall only arrive an hour or two before the hour mentioned.

Relying upon your coming, I will postpone further talk until then.

Ever sincerely yours, BAYARD TAYLOR.

Again, three days later, Mr. Taylor writes in relation to the seats for the impending Goethe festival: —

KENNETT SQUARE, PENN'A, *August 26*, 1875.

DEAR MR. LANIER: The box tickets have been sent to me *here*, and I lose no time in enclosing two. The celebration begins at 7½ instead of 8. It will be less trouble for you to go direct to the Hippodrome from Brooklyn; but I depend on your spending Sunday afternoon with me at 31 West 61st St. I may say that the engraved card of invitation says "Full dress for gentlemen," but I presume it is not rigorously meant, except for the *actors*. If Mrs. Lanier is not with you, there may be some friend whom you would like to take along. Pardon my haste: the Ode is only this moment finished, and must be copied.

Ever sincerely, BAYARD TAYLOR.

195 DEAN ST., BROOKLYN, N. Y., *August* 30, 1875.

DEAR MR. TAYLOR: The three numbered sonnets enclosed[1] are in continuation of those in the magazine which I mail herewith. Any criticism you may make on them when we meet again, I will take as a special

[1] Part of "Acknowledgment" (see "Poems"). The magazine referred to was the September "Lippincott's," which contained the four sonnets called "In Absence."

grace: for they form the beginning of a series which I will probably be writing all my life, knowing no other method of heart's-ease for my sense of the pure worshipfulness which dwells in the Lady they celebrate.

The other two are only a couple of little snatches which were both born last Thursday; and I don't know any other reason for sending them to you, save that they 're curiously unlike — for twins.

Sincerely yours, SIDNEY LANIER.

Thursday Afternoon, September 2, 1875.

MY DEAR MR. LANIER: I neglected to tell you, yesterday, that my address until the 20th will be: Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. If you go to Boston, don't fail to let me know in advance, so that I may send you letters to Longfellow and others. I saw Hassard again to-day, and he will be very glad to see you personally.

I can't tell you how rejoiced I am to find in you the genuine poetic nature, temperament, and *morale*. These are the necessary conditions of success (not in the lower popular meaning of the word) — of the possibility of steadily approaching one's ideal, for we never can, or ought to, reach it. All I can say is: "Be of good cheer!"

So, till we meet again,*

Faithfully your friend, BAYARD TAYLOR.

WESTMINSTER HOTEL, NEW YORK CITY,
September 25, 1875.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: For some time after my last charming day with you, it really seemed as if the ghost

* And afterwards, of course!

of Dr. Sangrado — him of bloody memory — had obtained permission to work his will upon me, as the Devil did upon Job: I was unmercifully phlebotomized; hæmorrhage came upon hæmorrhage.

Which I would not mention, except that I cannot bear you should believe any light cause able to prevent me from immediately acknowledging a note so thoroughly kind and heartsome as your last to me. When it came I was not allowed the privilege either of speaking or writing.

But I 'm getting in prime condition again, and anticipate with keen eagerness the pleasure of seeing you when you return.

Pray send me a line, to let me know when that will be. I 've moved over to New York; and my address is at the Westminster Hotel, this city.

My illness has deprived me of the pleasure of seeing Mr. Hassard; but I hope to call on him in a day or two. If you should see him before I do, I will thank you if you will say as much to him.

An accumulation of work keeps me at my desk the whole of each day and much of each night. I pray you, therefore, invert the littleness of these words, and therewith measure the scope of that affection wherein I am

Faithfully your friend,

SIDNEY LANIER.

31 WEST 61ST ST., *Tuesday, September* 28, 1875.

MY DEAR MR. LANIER: Yours of Saturday has just reached me here. While at Cedarcroft I heard (through Peacock) of your visit to Philadelphia and of the unfortunate return of your physical troubles — which I pray

may be over now, banished by the beautiful spirit of this autumn weather.

We are in all the agonies of moving — but a good fate brings us within two short blocks of your hotel. Between now and Friday night we hope to be comfortably settled in the Stuyvesant Building, 142 East 18th St., and I shall run around to see you as soon as the books and furniture are in their places. On Saturday evening we have the monthly meeting of the Century Club (in 15th St.) and I hope you will be strong enough to go with me. Bryant is President, and you will see Stoddard, Stedman, and many other good fellows. Pray don't make any engagement elsewhere, if you go out evenings.

I need n't excuse my haste this morning: you know what *packing* is. I look forward with delight to many more hours together.

Ever faithfully yours, BAYARD TAYLOR.

WESTMINSTER HOTEL, N. Y., *September* 29, 1875.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: Your note comes flushed with good news. For bringing me within two blocks of you I will in the most sublime manner forgive Fate a dozen heinous injuries.

I will eagerly await you on Friday evening; and will be delighted to go with you to the Century Club.

I write in the greatest haste, to-day not being long enough by some six hours for what I have to do before it ends.

— Which makes me realize how glorious is Friendship, to whose immortality the poor necessities of night and sleep do not exist.

Your friend, S. L.

WESTMINSTER HOTEL, *Friday Noon.*

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: Pray tell me if I must go in full dress to-night, — or only in a black frock.

Also, behold, in this I. sonnet, how this morning the idea which you were good enough to present me, last night, *would* sing itself in me till I could do no less than put it on paper.

Also tell me, when we meet to-night, if you have now any objections to the II. and III., — which you have seen before.

Your friend, S. L.

W. HOTEL, *Sunday Morning.*

MY DEAR FRIEND: Any time between now and to-morrow night, won't you please look over this Cushman stanza, and tell me when we next meet if you do not think it more consistent than formerly? I think to send it to Scribner's, if peradventure it may find favor in their eyes.

And won't you accept the MS. of this little Song?

I hope you 're quite well to-day. Don't trouble to answer this.

Hastily (and yet not hastily)

Your friend, S. L.

1425 WALNUT ST., PHILADELPHIA, PA.,
October 15, 1875.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: I hope you 'll like this little song,[1] which is but lately an inhabitant of this planet.

We — we is Mr. Peacock and I — were too sorry you could n't come over last night: though of course neither

[1] "Rose-Morals."

of us *hoped* much from the mere possibility that you *might* be able to come. It is likely I will be here a week, or perhaps ten days, longer. Did I not hear you say that you would be leaving New York next week? Pray tell me how long you 'll be away.

I will miss my Saturday-night to-morrow; and I would be strongly inclined to consider this a very cross-purpose indeed, if I did not feel myself so indebted to Purpose already.

And perhaps it is well enough for me to be away for a week or two. I want to digest Mr. —— and Mr. ——. I find that spiritually we are cannibals, all: we feed upon each other, soul assimilates and makes tissue of soul.

I have n't time to *write* you.

God be praised that you exist, — is a frequent ejaculation of

Your friend, SIDNEY LANIER.

142 EAST 18TH ST., NEW YORK, *October* 16, 1875.

MY DEAR LANIER: Just returned from the "Century" breakfast to Lord Houghton (which was charming, and most inspiriting to all authors!), I find your note. I go out of town in an hour, and must reply in haste.

Your song is delightful. I 'm glad to find that you are taking these "swallow-flights" — they have their true place, and through them the poet often learns a great deal. Forgive me two technical criticisms. The end of verse 2d —

"Say yea, say yea!"

is too monotonous in sound. The one vowel (and not one of the best vowel-sounds) repeated four times is too

much, especially as "dares the day" comes two lines before it.

"Ah, say not nay!"

(for instance) gets rid of two of the sounds, and is quite as pleading, though less eager. Also the additional foot in the penultimate line of the poem violates its melody. Could you not say:

"That from my soul as leaf from stem may fly
My songs, I pray!"

I can't see that anything is lost by this change, which preserves the metre. The conception of the little piece is perfect. Of course, you will not accept these suggestions unless they seem valid to your own mind.

Meanwhile, hearty thanks for sending me the MS.! I shall be in New York *next* week, but shall be absent two days of the following week, and after that only here on Saturdays and Sundays. My round of dreary lecturing begins again, and I must roll a heavy stone over the fountain of my Muse.

Thank Mr. Peacock for his kind invitation. I would have come, had it been possible; but there was the proof of two articles to revise, and my new lecture (on "Literature as an Art," to be delivered next Friday) is not yet finished! Hoping to see both of you here before long, and with the heartiest greetings to Peacock, I remain

Ever faithfully your friend,

BAYARD TAYLOR.

1425 WALNUT ST., PHILADELPHIA, PA.,
October 29, 1875.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: I have just received a letter from that lovely Charlotte Cushman, which invites

me with such lavish goodness to come to her that I cannot at all resist; and so I'm going there (Boston: Parker House) for a few days, before returning South. I will stop in New York a day or two on my way back — probably about a week from now — to see you. Will you be there? As I will remain in Boston about a week I will be glad to avail myself of your kind offer of letters to Mr. Longfellow and Mr. Lowell. They will reach me if sent to the Parker House, where Miss Cushman is staying, and where I will stop.

On second thought, as her letter contains a message to Lord Houghton (who, it seems, went to Newport to see her, but missed her) which you will much more likely be able to deliver than I, I'll enclose it herein. Her disease renders her unable to sit at a table: hence she writes in pencil. Pray read her letter, if only to see what a fair large Soul it is.

I sent you a paper ("The Graphic" of 27th) which contains a very pretty compliment to me in the shape of a poem by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, based on a quoted line from my "Symphony." The same paper contains an extract from my paper on "St. Augustine," which unfortunately the scissors-wielder clipped off just as the climax was reached. The —— takes occasion to give me some pain, anent this poor St. Augustine article, by first making a statement which is grossly inaccurate, and next basing on it a criticism which would be unjust even if its foundation were not untrue, and finally dismissing the subject with a comparison of my merits and Mrs. ——'s, which is as pure a piece of gratuitous ungentlemanliness as a vulgar soul could well devise. Not that I care in the least for the judgment, or that I shall change my "foible" — foible! of seeing God in every-

thing: but the point where the pain comes in is simply that it may interfere with one's already very short allowance of bread, by making the magazines shy of giving employment to one who fails to please the ——. What a diatribe I 've written! But such indignation as you detect herein is wholly impersonal, and entirely due to that repugnance with which one sees a really strong newspaper turning over articles to be "criticised" by persons who do not even understand the usages of gentlemen. How differently come your criticisms, which I always receive thankfully whether unfavorable or otherwise!

Mr. Peacock sends messages of friendly remembrance to you.

Pray make my compliments to the ladies of your house, and believe me always, my dear Mr. Taylor,

Your faithful friend, SIDNEY LANIER.

142 EAST 18TH ST., N. Y., *November* 1, 1875.

MY DEAR LANIER: I found your letter late on Saturday, on my return from a trip up the Hudson. This morning I hasten to send you the letters, hoping they will reach you in good season. I also return Miss Cushman's letter, thinking you will prefer to keep it. Give her my love, which she has always had since I knew her.

As for the ——, be calm! that is nothing, and will have no effect whatever. I had not seen the article, but found it at the Century, and also read the whole of your "St. Augustine," which is poetical in parts, and wholly bright and readable. When you consider that for eight years the —— has snubbed me and sneered at me in the most vulgar way, and "I still live," you will not allow so flippant a notice to trouble you.

I should like to write much more, but have a great deal of work on hand and many distractions. Be sure and stop on your way back. I shall be here all this week and next Sunday, but not next week. If Whittier should come to Boston, go and see him: it will be enough to say that you are my friend. He is thoroughly noble, and you will like him.

I breakfast with Lord Houghton to-morrow, and will give him Miss Cushman's message. As Manto says to Faust (Part II.), "On! Be bold!"

Ever faithfully yours, BAYARD TAYLOR.

MACON, GA., *November* 24, 1875.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: Poets understand everything: I doubt not you well know a certain sort of happiness which at the same time locks up expression and enlarges fancy, and you will therefore easily comprehend how it is that thirty days have passed without any message from me to you, although there has been no one of them during which you were not constantly in my mind. This happiness of which I speak — which freezes one's pen and tongue while it melts one's heart — means in the present instance that I have been at home for ten days past, joyfully reunited with the other — and far sweeter — Moiety of me. My three young men — one of seven, one of five and one of two years — keep me in an endless labyrinth of surprises and delights: nothing could be more keen, more fresh, more breezy, than the meeting together of their little immense loves with the juicy selfishness and honest animalisms of the dear young cubs. What a prodigious Candor they practise! They're as little ashamed of being beasts as they are proud of being gods: they accept themselves at the

hands of their Creator with perfect unreserve: pug nose or Greek, blue eyes or gray, beasthood or godhood — it 's all one to them. What 's the good of metaphysical moping as long as Papa 's at home and you 've got a Mama to kiss and a new ball from now till dinner and *then* apples!

This is their philosophy: it is really a perfect scheme of life, and contains all the essential terms of religion, while — as for philosophy — it is perfectly clear upon points which have remained obscure from Plato down to George Lewes.

How I wish my lovely two-year-old boy — my royal Hal — could look you in the eyes for once, and put his arms deliberately round your neck and give you one of his fervent kisses! Fancy that your big Lars was also a baby, and also a poet; and you 'll have a whiff of it.

Your letters came to me while I was with Miss Cushman, and were the means of procuring for me two delightful afternoons with Mr. Lowell and Mr. Longfellow. I was sorry to miss Mr. Aldrich. I wrote him a little note, to find out when he would be in town. He replied that he could not come until after I had left Boston, but added that he would be in New York during the winter, "when perhaps Mr. Taylor would be good enough — he is good enough for anything — to bring us together."

I 'm sure you 'll care to know that I had a charming visit to Miss Cushman, and that each day was crowded with pleasant things which she and her numerous friends had prepared for me.

I leave Macon for Baltimore on Friday next. My address there will be 64 Centre St., and I will hope to hear from you very soon after my arrival. I resume my old place as first flute of the Peabody Orchestra, which

lasts until March; though hoping all the time still to find some opportunity for getting my longed-for chair of The Physics and Metaphysics of Music established in some college or other.

My pretty Comrade here begs that she may be allowed to join me in grateful and affectionate messages to you, —for she knows in detail all your thoughtful kindliness in my behalf. Pray let me not quite drop out of the recollection of Mrs. Taylor and of your daughter.

Your friend, SIDNEY LANIER.

142 EAST 18TH ST., NEW YORK, *December* 13, 1875.

MY DEAR LANIER: I have been so much away lecturing, and always find so much work waiting for me on my return home for Sunday, that your welcome letter from Macon has remained unanswered. Even now, I can hardly say more than that I shall be in Baltimore, to lecture before the Peabody Institute, on the 21st and 23d, and shall certainly see you then. I stop at the Carrolton. I think the name of the Provost of the P. Institute is Morison, and I beg you will use my name with him to get tickets, in case you desire to hear the lecture. But there will probably be time enough for that, after I reach Baltimore. Now it just occurs to me that the best way will be to join me at the hotel and go with me. We can then have a glass of punch together, afterwards.

I have no news to send; for the lecturing season is one of intellectual torpor to me, in all other respects. I become a mere talking-machine, and vegetate between whiles.

Pardon this haste and incoherence, and believe me

Ever faithfully your friend,

BAYARD TAYLOR

142 East 18th St., N. Y., *December* 28, 1875.

My dear Lanier: I write in a hurry, but have something to say. General Hawley, President of the U. S. Centennial Commission, has invited me to write a *Hymn* for the grand opening ceremonies. There is to be also an original *Cantata*, the text of which was to be asked of Stedman, but he is gone to Panama, and neither Theo. Thomas nor Dudley Buck (the composer) will wait his return. General Hawley asked me to name a poet *not* of New England, so I suggested a Southern poet for the Cantata. I feel quite sure *you* will be the choice.

I write in all haste to say — you *must* accept, if it is offered. The Cantata should not be more than from 40 to 50 lines long, of unity of conception, yet capable of being divided easily into three parts — an opening chorus, a bass solo, and a finale, either general or alternating chorus. The measure ought to be irregular, yet sufficiently rhythmical. My additional suggestion is — and I think you 'll pardon it — to make the lines simple and strong, keep down the play of fancy (except where it may give room for a fine musical phrase), and aim at expressing the *general* feeling of the nation rather than individual ideas — though the latter might be much finer.

I have just had a visit from Theo. Thomas and Mr. Buck, and we talked the whole matter over. Thomas remembers you well, and Mr. Buck says it would be specially agreeable to him to compose for the words of a Southern poet. I have taken the liberty of speaking for you, both to them and to General Hawley, and you must not fail me.

As soon as you accept, write a line to Dudley Buck, 100 West 54th St., N. Y., saying so.

Now, my dear Lanier, I am sure you *can* do this worthily. It's a great occasion, — not especially for poetry as an art, but for Poetry to assert herself as a power. I must close, being very busy. This is to prepare you a little and set your thoughts as soon as possible in the direction of the task.

Ever faithfully yours, BAYARD TAYLOR.

My love to the boy.

66 CENTRE ST., BALTIMORE, MD., *December* 29, 1875.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: If it were a cantata upon your goodness . . . I 'm willing to wager I could write a stirring one and a grateful withal.

Of course I will accept — when 't is offered. I only write a hasty line now to say how deeply I am touched by the friendly forethought of your letter.

Charley joins me in love to you; and I add a hearty wish that the New Year may be to you a friend no less loving than will always be S. L.

64 CENTRE ST., BALTIMORE, MD., *January* 4, 1876.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: General Hawley's invitation has just arrived and I have sent my acceptance. I will probably see Theodore Thomas here on Monday next, and will try to arrange a meeting with Mr. Buck in New York soon.

There is n't the least use in my trying to thank you for this pleasant surprise; but I *do* wish I could tell you the delight with which I find my name associated with yours in this way.

Are we at liberty to mention our appointment in this behalf to our friends? I only ask, remembering that

the name of the Centennial poet has not yet been officially announced, — at least so far as I know.

Charley sends you his love. I write in much haste, but am no less always

Your faithful and grateful S. L.

142 East 18th St., N. Y., *January* 7, 1876.

My dear Lanier: I have so many distractions in these days that I really forgot (temporarily) to send you my volume, and am glad of your reminder. I 'll order it done this morning. As the book goes by mail, I can't write your name in it, but I 'll do that afterwards.

I think it best to let the Centennial Commission make the announcements of orators and poets. I 've mentioned my share, confidentially, to one or two friends, but shall not let it get into print. I am very glad you accept so heartily; I know that General Hawley is quite pleased to have you do the work. I should say eight days would be ample time: you must not exceed fifty lines; my Hymn will be 20 to 24, only. "Occasional" poetical work should always be brief, appropriate in idea, and technically good. One dare not be imaginative or *particularly* original.

I leave here on the 13th for a lecturing tour through the West which will last five weeks. It 's the hardest part of my winter work. But any letter sent here will be forwarded to me.

Don't overvalue my friendly good-will, nor ever let it impose the least sense of obligation upon you. I am very glad when I can be some encouragement to a man in whom I have faith. Give my love to Charley, and believe me always faithfully

Your friend, Bayard Taylor.

66 Centre St., Baltimore, Md., *January* 9, 1876.

Dear Mr. Taylor: Yesterday I impressed myself with these following principles:

1st. That the Cantata was to be sung not only at our Centennial, but at a festival where the world was our invited guest, to be welcomed;

2d. That spread-eagleism would be ungraceful and unworthy;

3d. That something ought to be said in the poem;

4th. That it afforded room to give the musical composer an opportunity to employ the prodigious tone-contrasts of sober reflection, the sea, lamentation, a battle, warning, and magnificent yet sober and manly triumph and welcome;

5th. That it ought to be, not rhymed philosophy, but a genuine song, and lyric outburst.

Having put this offering on my altar, I waited; and this morning I saw that the Fire had come down from a gracious Heaven, and that it was burning.

Here is the result. Pray read it, and send me word immediately — and with perfect candor — as to such parts of it as strike you unfavorably.

I wish I could hear you intone it, *ore rotundo!*

Your friend S. L.

66 Centre St., Baltimore, Md., *January* 12, 1876.

Dear Mr. Taylor: Being cool next day, I found some flaws in my poem; and having made out a working copy of it (by reading the analysis of movements written in the margin, you will see what immense resources it offers to the musician), I send it to you. Pray let me know freely if the whole is worthy.

Always your friend S. L.

I have not yet sent it to Mr. Buck.

142 East 18th St., N. Y., *January* 12, 1876.

My dear Lanier: Just in time! — for I must leave to-morrow. Your principles of conception and construction are right, and the execution, as *a whole*, is successful. My task will be to carefully examine details. I have numbered the lines, to avoid any mistakes.

2. See if you can't find a better word instead of "larger."

3. "Stairèd" will not do, especially after "hundred-*terraced*." As you are looking down, why not say "climbing" — but never "stairèd."

7 and 8. I think you can get two better lines: "where" has not a good effect, at the end of the line, and I don't quite like "rage in air." How would something like this answer?

> Out of yonder misty deep
> Where old toil and $\frac{\text{struggle}}{\text{battle}}$ sleep.

10. Is "balking" the best adjective?

16. There 's something hard and awkward about this line.

17, 18, 19. The repetition seems to weaken the effect. I would suggest a change like this, in the stanza:

> Unto every scattered band
> At the portals of the land,
> Hunger cries: "Ye shall not stay!"
> Winter cries: "Ye must away!"
> Vengeance cries: "Beware my day!"
> From the shore and from the sea,
> "No! It shall not be!"

22 to 31, inclusive. I like these ten lines least of all. "Tonguèd" is not agreeable, and "prescribèd"

and "conscribèd" make quite an unpleasant impression, as of artifice. Line 25 is not quite intelligible. The stanza would be much better, if lines 24, 25, 26, and 27 were wholly omitted. But I should much prefer a smoother stanza, hinting at toil, patience, growth, and the blending of different Old-World elements. The prohibitory strain is carried too far: it reaches a climax in the preceding stanza, and you want something else interposed between that and the new refrain: "It was: it is," etc. *Could n't* you make a stanza after this fashion?

Courage stood and faltered not
Patience
Toil
Cavalier and Puritan
Holland
Huguenot
Wrought, joined hands, welded separate links into one chain,
Etc. etc.

Then the new movement, it seems to me, would come in with fine effect.

36, 37, 38. Are these lines really necessary? They may be in a musical sense. "Now *still* thee" is not a good expression, and there is a little too evident *purpose* in "underworld" and "thunderworld."

50. "Lover" is not true, and is rather weak here. Why not say,

"The world's new Host salutes the welcome world"?

There! I have found all the fault I can. If you will only change the lines 22 to 31, I think it will answer admirably, and be most welcome. The plan is entirely

poetical, and ought to be made very effective in music. I want, for your sake, to have the Cantata universally liked, but you will be sharply set upon if you use the words "stairèd," "prescribèd" and "conscribèd," and the line "clothes for men," etc. (25). Why not yield that much, for this once? I also think that the suggestion I make for the change in the stanza will make the whole piece more popular. There is both originality and lyric fire everywhere else.

I write hastily, having much to do, and you 'll want the MS. at once. May the music be worthy!

Always faithfully yours, B. T.

66 Centre St., Baltimore, Md.,
January 13, 1876.

My dear Mr. Taylor: I agree with your main points of objection; and I will change the stanza about which you are most apprehensive. I 'm particularly charmed to find that you don't think the poem *too* original. I tried hard to think — in a kind of average and miscellaneousness.

I read and explained it to Thomas last night; he said, "I think Mr. Buck ought to be delighted with the musical conception of the poem:" adding that of course he would not dare to pronounce upon the poetic merits of it beyond saying that the ideas seemed to him very beautiful.

I sent you the copy showing the movements, before I had received your letter. I 'll send a final copy when I 've finished it. You see I had to compose for the musician as well as the country, and had to cast the poem into such a form as would at once show well in music (where contrast of movement between each adja-

cent part, in broad *bands of color*, was, from the nature of the art, a controlling consideration) and in poetry. I wished indeed to make it as large and as simple as a Symphony of Beethoven's. If it does not come up to this, I 've failed; but your commendation confirms my own cool feeling about it, which is that it will do.

I thank — but I won't, either, for it 's simply absurd. Your criticisms on the piece are invaluable to me; for though I don't agree with all of them, the sharp re-examinations which they compel me to make develop many things which otherwise would not be developed.

Charley sends love, and mine is always sent before.

Your friend, S. L.

January 13, 1876.

My dear Lanier: I have barely time (while my wife packs my valise) to say that the change you have made in the next to the last movement is altogether better. Now please rewrite the stanza beginning "Then the smiting-tonguèd swords." Something expressing patience, toil, and growth is required between the menace of failure and the triumphant success. The transition is too sudden. And the stanza, as it at present stands, mars the beauty of the Cantata. As I said before, "stairèd years" must also be changed. If you doubt my judgment in the matter, consult Peacock also. I suppose I need n't return this second MS. Good-bye!

Ever yours, Bayard Taylor.

66 Centre St., Baltimore, Md., *January* 15, 1876.

Dear Mr. Taylor: You are so far responsible for me as the writer of this Cantata that I don't intend to feel satisfaction until I am sure that you think the poem absolutely worthy of the country and of poetry as an art. Therefore, having after two days' cooling found many faults with it myself, I have quite rewritten it, and send it to you, hoping that you will let me know if it seems to you entirely large, simple, and melodious. For it is to this that I have directed all my efforts in it: I have had constantly in my mind those immortal melodies of Beethoven in which, with little more than the chords of the tonic and dominant, he has presented such firm, majestic, and at the same time artless ideas. Of course, with the general world — especially in a Swinburnian time — I do not expect to obtain the least recognition of the combination of child-like candors and colossal philosophies which I have endeavored here to put in words; but I do wish to know whether to you the poem as *you* now see it comes near this ideal. I don't believe there is the least necessity for me to beg you not to have the least regard for *me* in pronouncing upon anything that you still find wanting. I desire the poem to be perfect.

I put the *Farewell, dear England* into the Mayflower strophe because Mather relates that the people in the vessel actually stood up and cried out these words as they were departing. I also entirely rewrote the stanza you did not like; and then inserted a whisper chorus (of the Huguenot and Puritan, in dactyllic measure) to prepare by its straining pianissimo for the outburst of jubilation.

Always your friend S. L.

Bay City, Mich., *January* 20, 1876.

My dear Lanier: Thank you! The revised *Cantata*, which I have just received through my wife's letter, is in every way better than the first draught. It is what it purports to be — a *Cantata*, not an Ode — with the musical character inherent in its structure and not to be separated. If the composer seconds you properly, the effect cannot be otherwise than grand and satisfactory. I have only a few slight technical faults to find. "A *weltering flow*" — a sluggish, aimless tide — hardly corresponds with "*ridged* with acts," which indicates billows and a *direction* of the tide. Now, your idea is clear to me, and I think it might be expressed in a more logical figure.

I don't like, either, the molossus "Grōwn foūl Bāds," nor the use of "Bads" as a noun. The latter is not incorrect, but it is somehow disagreeable. "Evils grown in alien air" would read better to *me*.

The Huguenot and Puritan stanza is a great improvement.

The word "stertorous" seems to me out of tone — it sounds more medical than poetical, and the noun *death* makes it worse. In the next line "brōthĕr-wārs nēw-dārk" has a heavy effect, and will be very hard to sing. Yet the *meaning* is just what is wanted.

Thence to the end all is excellent.

I have forgotten one other: "noisy lords, *Tongued* with lithe and poisoned swords," is much too *forced* an image. You seem to be fond of the word "tongued," but in this instance it may be best to use a little self-denial. It is an expression which will give the spiteful critics a chance, — if it were good I should say, "Damn

the spiteful critics!" but I *don't* think it good. Turn the matter over once more in your mind.

There! Is that fault enough to find? I've examined every line severely, and find nothing more. You have already added fifty per cent to the merit of the work. I am too busy to write more: pardon this abrupt breaking-off!

Ever most faithfully, BAYARD TAYLOR.

66 CENTRE STREET, BALTIMORE, MD.,
February 27, 1876.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: Pray tell me how you are. I wished for you all day yesterday with special fervor, thinking how the bland and sunny air that bathed us all here would have soothed your malady. I was grieved to miss your call, and would have run round to inquire about you but was entirely occupied by business until six, when I quitted New York for Philadelphia.

It has been uphill work with me to struggle against the sense of loss which the departure of my beloved Charlotte Cushman leaves with me. She and you were the only friends among the Artists I have ever had; and since she is gone I am as one who has lost the half of his possessions. The passion to which my devotion to her had grown takes it hard when sight and hearing are both become forevermore impossible. To-day, though keenly desirous to rest after a week of great strain, this little poem teased me till it was on paper. I hope you will think it not wholly unworthy. As I read it over now a disagreeable fancy comes that the last two lines of it are somewhat like something of somebody else, and these vague "somes" are intolerable. Pray tell me if this is so.

Make my compliments to Mrs. Taylor. I hope Miss Taylor is quite recovered.

Charley joins me in love to you; and I am always

Your friend S. L.

142 East 18th St., New York, *March* 4, 1876.

My dear Lanier: I did n't answer you sooner, because I wanted to send you my Hymn — to read and ponder over — and it was not quite ready. Here it is, now, and I ask you to be as frank with me about it as I am wont to be with you. If I take offence, don't believe me again!

I have been worse since you left, but am now about as usual. I lecture in Philadelphia on Monday, and hope to see Peacock, if but for a moment. I can make no stay there, but must hurry back, next morning.

Your poem is strong and full of feeling, with which the occasional roughness entirely harmonizes. The idea is a little similar to a poem of mine, "The Mystery," but is very differently expressed. I notice no resemblance to anything in the last lines. I have accumulated work during my enforced idleness, and must be brief to-day. All three of us send greetings. Love to Charley!

Ever faithfully yours,

Bayard Taylor.

66 Centre St., Baltimore, Md.,
March 11, 1876.

My dear Mr. Taylor: I 've only just crawled out of a sick-bed where I have been spending one of the most unsatisfactory weeks of my existence, — a week whose place in the General Plan of Good I find as much difficulty in justifying as Croton-bugs, or children born idiots, or the sausage-grinding school of poetry.

I have particularly desired to write you about The Hymn. Of course the value of a friend's criticism in this kind is simply that when one has to write in a hurry, the friend is in the nature of one's own Conscience of Beauty (as you have beautifully called your wife) *as that conscience will be after the coolness of time has come.* The friend is a mere anticipation of time, — one's-self-after-a-while. Purely upon this theory I acquire boldness enough to say what follows. 1st. generally. Inasmuch as the opening verse presents a noble *Tema,* or motive, of triple design in the ideas of

$$\text{The God of} \begin{cases} \text{Peace} \\ \text{Toil} \\ \text{\& Beauty} \end{cases}$$

would it not be best to carry on this motive entirely through the poem, making (say) the II. verse converge upon the idea of Peace, the III. upon Toil, IV. upon Beauty (or Art), and (if you choose) V. re-gathering the whole by means of some common tone, — the whole thus gaining perfect unity of impression? In looking down the poem with this view, one easily sees that with a very small change of phraseology it can be perfectly carried out. In the III. verse you have indeed returned to the original motive in a very beautiful manner: — the oak of toil, the rose of art, etc. The II. verse ought on three accounts clearly to be stricken out: (1) it is a departure from the whole plan of the poem; (2) it is explanatory of what all the parties to the hymn thoroughly understand already to be the situation; (3) it is below the plane of the other conceptions. Conceding these views for a moment (and I think there can be no doubt that your cool judgment after a while will estimate the

poem precisely according to the success with which it carries out the general scheme indicated), the following will be an outline of the poem as it will finally appear:

I.

(Just as you have it; or with any transposition of the lines that may seem desirable to facilitate the new arrangement.)

II.

(For this you can take your number IV. and with a slight change of idea make the whole refer to *Peace*, as for example a general supplication that, although our *eras* are but as dust, yet dust may become fruitful, and Peace may be vouchsafed as the climate favorable, etc., etc.)

III.

(This is nearly ready in the number III. of the poem, which closes with the lovely reference to the oak of Toil and the rose of Beauty (or Art). The opposition of these two is so fine that it suffices to authorize the consolidated treatment of the ideas of Toil and Beauty in one and the same verse.)

IV.

(For this your number V. can easily be made to serve by directing its general tone upon the three prominent ideas already treated, having reference to the exchanging of each with each, and the relation of each to the God of the three, thus making a perfect return to the I. and ending as it were upon the tonic. This would make the poem perfect in four stanzas: and it can all be done without altering the structure of the sentences at all, and with only changing here and there a noun, a

verb, or an adjective, so as to make the sense point always towards the thematic ideas.

2nd. If, however, this does not happen to meet your fancy, and you decide to retain the poem as it is, there are one or two minor matters to which your attention should be called.

1st. I am clear that the II. should either disappear entirely or be replaced, for the reasons hereinbefore stated.

2d. In III. the sounds of "thy guidance" (*y* and long *i*), and of "made failure" (two long *a*'s), seem bad, particularly as they come so close to each other.

3d. In IV. the idea in the two lines which come after the first two should be a more closely logical *sequitur* upon them.

4th. The fourth line of V. (I mean "thyself in *him*" only: the rest of the line is perfect) can be justified in one's thought, but it compels one to think hard in order to do that, — and this is a disadvantage. Can you not make it a little more transparent? Again, the last two lines might *so* easily be made to reaffirm and point the first stanza as well as the whole poem: *e.g.*,

All conquering Peace thy gift divine,
All Toil, all Beauty { shadowing / meeting / imaging / based on } Thine!

I think further, in reference to these last two lines, that it would be well to give them either a stronger hold by a verb of some sort, or some turn more precisely parallel with the rest of the verse. The first two couplets commence with "Let each with each," and "Let each in

each," which is fine; it is somewhat weakening the force of these to close with a grammatically independent couplet which has no verb at all.

Of course you understand that I like the poem (except the II. verse); all the ideas are noble, and there is a simple grandeur in the expressions which is fine. All my suggestions are made simply with a view to concentrate the impression. The shot are all good: let them not scatter, but strike like one bullet.

Pray let me see the poem again, as soon as you put it in final form.

Charley sends love. I am rejoiced to know that you are quite recovered: bronchitis always scares me. Let your two ladies know that they are held in good remembrance; and believe me always

Your friend, S. L.

142 East 18th St., N. Y., *St. Patrick's Day*, 1876.

My dear Lanier: Thanks for your long and interesting comment. What you say of verse II. is very nearly my own impression; but I made it because the Centennial Board requested mention of the occasion. It can easily be omitted. But I don't entirely agree with you in regard to a rigid architectural structure for the hymn: a strict appropriation of three stanzas to the three manifestations of the Deity, with a union of all at the beginning and end, would give a too conscious air of design. Here, again, is an instance where you cannot apply the laws of Music to Poetry. The hymn is to be sung by many, not divided into parts, and its fitness depends on the *whole expression* much more than upon a finished artistic form.

However, my part has been changed within two days,

and the Hymn will not be sung at all. I have been asked to write the Ode for the grand national celebration of the 4th of July, and have accepted. Bryant, Longfellow, and Lowell declined, and Whittier and Holmes urged my appointment. I dare not decline; yet I feel the weight of the task, and shall both work and pray ardently for success. Of course, I have withdrawn the Hymn, as it would be manifestly improper for me to do both. Some one else will be appointed immediately. Please don't mention the matter for four or five days yet, by which time it will be officially announced. I shall miss your poetic companionship, for which the oration will not compensate me; but you will readily see that I cannot do otherwise.

I am hurried this morning, and also have a headache, from bumping against the edge of a suddenly opened door; so you 'll pardon my brevity. I 'll try to write again in a few days.

Ever faithfully yours, BAYARD TAYLOR.

66 CENTRE ST., BALTIMORE, MD., *March* 20, 1876.

Bravissimo, dear Mr. Taylor; why, this is the very Fitness of Things: the appointment matches, as a rhyme matches a rhyme: nothing can be more evident than that God has temporarily taken the direction of matters into His own hands. I think with all honesty, and apart from friendly preference, that you will do the Ode far better than either of the three other gentlemen could; and I send you my congratulations and fair wishes with a certain sense of indignant triumph in the coming-to-pass of what ought to have been.

I see, from what you say in reply to my letter on the Hymn, that my musical associations have put me under

a certain general suspicion with you, of a propensity to impart the principles of musical construction into poetry. But this was a principle far larger than any peculiar to music or to any one art. I am so much interested in it that I am going to beg you to let me plead the case with you a moment.

Permit me first to say that I came at it, not by any reasoning prepense, but by examination, afterwards, of wholly unconscious procedure. It revealed itself clearly to me in thinking about a little poem I wrote a few days ago. Perhaps I can best illustrate it by first quoting the poem, which is a pendant to a little song you have already seen, being No. II. of "Rose-Morals":

Soul, get thee to the heart
Of yonder tube-rose, hide thee there,
There breathe the meditations of thine Art
Suffused with prayer.

Of spirit grave, yet light,
How fervent fragrances uprise
Pure-born from these most rich and yet most white
Virginities!

Mulched with unsavory death,
Grow, Soul, unto such white estate
That art and virginal prayer shall be thy breath,
Thy work, thy fate.

Now it seems to me — as a mere extended formulation of the thoroughly unconscious action of the mind in this poem — that every poem, from a sonnet to Macbeth, has substantially these elements, — (1) a Hero, (2) a Plot, and (3) a Crisis; and that its perfection as a work of art will consist in the simplicity and the completeness with which the first is involved in the second and illus-

trated in the third. In the case of a short poem the Hero is the central Idea, whatever that may be; the plot is whatever is said about that idea, its details all converging, both in tone and in general direction, thereupon: and the crisis is the unity of impression sealed or confirmed or climaxed by the last connected sentence, or sentiment, or verse, of the poem. Of course I mean that this is the most general expression of the artistic plan of a poem: it is the system of verses, which may be infinitely varied, but to which all variations may be finally referred. I do not think that there is, as you feared, any necessary reason why a poem so constructed should present "a too-conscious air of design;" that is a matter which will depend solely upon the genuineness of the inspiration and the consummate command of his resources by the artist.

Is not this framework essentially that of every work of any art? Does not every painting, every statue, every architectural design owe whatever it has of artistic perfection to the nearness with which it may approach the fundamental scheme of a Ruling Idea (or Hero), a Plot (or involution of the Ruling Idea in complexities related to or clustering about it), and a Dénouement or Impression-as-a-whole?

I don't mean this for a theory; I hate theories; I intend it only to be a convenient synthesis of a great number of small facts; and therefore I don't stickle at all for calling the elements of a work of art "Heroes," or "Parts," or "Crises," and the like, — only using those terms as the shortest way of expressing my meaning.

Anyway, fair fall the Ode. I hope that God will let you into Heaven, with no limitations as to walking on the grass or picking the flowers, till you 've got all you want.

Mr. Buck has sent me a copy of the piano score of the Cantata, but I have not yet had time to examine it thoroughly. Anything will go well, though, with a large chorus to sing it and Thomas' orchestra to play it. . . .

If it will not trouble you I will be glad if you 'll send me whatever announcement of your appointment shall be made.

Charley joins me in fair remembrances to you and the ladies of your house.

Write me soon, as to your always desirous

S. L.

N. Y., *March* 23, 1876.

My dear Lanier: Thanks for your long letter, which requires a more careful reply than I can give this morning. I 'll write more at length on Sunday.

The announcement of my Ode was made yesterday, and I enclose you what Bryant says about it. I 'll add (in confidence, as yet) that Whittier will probably write the Hymn in my stead. I had a letter from him this morning, and he does n't decline, at least.

I am just now a good deal busier than usual, for my "Tribune" work takes more time at first, having been out of harness so long. Then there have been a great many delayed (almost *protested*) social debts to be paid; which are more or less fatiguing, however pleasant. Pray be charitable to my enforced brevity this morning!

Ever yours, Bayard Taylor.

66 Centre St., Baltimore, Md., *March* 24, 1876.

Dear Mr. Taylor: Don't trouble to write me any elaborate reply. I only send you this continuation of my thought about the centralization of ideas in poems because I have been studying your work within the last two

or three months, and have become clearly satisfied that *that* is the direction in which you should grow. You tend *from* it by reason of the very stress and crowding of the multitudinous good things which you give to the world. I find poems of yours in which every sentiment, every thought, every line — *as* sentiment, thought or line — is exquisite, and yet which do not give a full white light *as poems* for want of a proper convergence of the components upon a single point. Sometime we will talk of this: I am not at all sure that in my hasty letters — for I am worked almost to the annihilation of sleep and of meals — I have given anything like a clear idea of what I mean.

But this *do* write me: what do you mean by your "Tribune work"? Are you officially connected with the paper; and how?

Interrogatory 2nd: please state why Longfellow, Bryant, and Lowell declined the Ode.

I am going night and day on *my* Centennial Ode for the Magazine, which is to be illustrated and made the feature of the July number. It has to be furnished early in April, and I am only about half through. Some people will put their hands to their ears at the doctrine it preaches. My musical engagement here is now completed, and as the poem is the only piece of work I have, I suppose God intends me to feed on blackberries all the summer.

Charley sends you his love, with which also goes that of your friend, S. L.

142 East 18th St., New York, *March* 26, 1876.

My dear Lanier: After all, I can't reply at length, even to-night, to your penultimate letter. You are quite

right in your application of your scheme of Song to many of my poems; I am well aware of the deficiencies of my early work. Nor do I disagree with you at all in regard to the necessity of strictly proper-timed form; only there is no single *schema* for all *themas*, and my nature bids me elaborate and round a poetical conception in my brain before I write, letting it find its own manner and form. Poetical ideas have a wilful being of their own, and there are cases where they are best expressed through an apparent disregard of form. Of course I don't refer here to my hymn, or to anything of my own.

While keenly feeling, and trying more and more to apprehend the beauty of perfect form in verse, some instinct in me shrinks from too rigidly defining it. Is this comprehensible to you?

The response to the announcement of my new appointment has been far more cordial than I dared to hope for. Bryant's generous notice struck the key-note which a great many papers have echoed. But all the greater is the cloud of responsibility hanging over me. I feel as if my nerves and muscles were slowly setting for a desperate deed, as in one chosen to lead a forlorn hope. But I can only give what is in me, and if my possible best (under the depressing circumstances) is counted failure, I hope some little courage of nature will not be denied me.

I have seen no single notice of your part in the Opening solemnities that was not friendly. Since it is almost certain that Whittier will write the Hymn, the appropriateness of the two selections is admitted by everybody. You can now easily make yourself (as you are) the representative of the South in American Song.

I am now doing — and shall probably continue to do

— regular daily work on the "Tribune." It's a little hard at first, after twenty years' holiday from such labor, but I 'm slowly working into it. I must give up much of my lecturing, or I shall *never* get on with my life of Goethe; and six hours a day given to pot-boiling leaves me at least three for my own dear, *unpaying* work.

Bryant probably declined on account of his age — eighty-two; Longfellow from his neuralgia in the head; Lowell urged illness as his excuse, but I think there must have been some other cause. Whittier and Holmes both urged my appointment, and so — here I am! Some day, I hope, the circumstances will be known, and I shall get at least a little credit for patriotic willingness to step in and fill up the breach at the eleventh hour.

Love to Charlie and yourself from

Yours ever faithfully,

BAYARD TAYLOR.

66 CENTRE ST., BALTIMORE, MD., *April* 1, 1876.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: Will you do me the favor to read this and send it back to me, if you do not find it objectionable?[1] I am going to offer it to the "Tribune." If they print it, so: if they do not, I will try some one else. I have endeavored to speak with the utmost justice towards the "Tribune's" critic, and modestly as regards myself. If you can make any suggestions to me which will enable me to see it otherwise than a duty *to speak at all*, I will be profoundly thankful to you. In any case of a poem of my own private giving forth, I would never dream of rebuking

[1] A defence and explanation of the Centennial Cantata (see Lanier's "Music and Poetry," 1898).

the most brutal critic for mistaking my artistic purposes as artistic ignorances: but many of the people who will read this "Tribune" attack are not only incapable of judging its correctness, but will be prevented from seeing the whole poem for yet six weeks, and will therefore come to its final perusal with the prepossession that the author of it was stupidly ignorant of the first principles which should guide a writer of text for music. This prepossession is a wrong on the public, and without reference to its wrong on me should be immediately and decisively overturned.

Before I send the paper to the "Tribune," I will submit it to Mr. Buck.

I 'm hard at my Ode, and see the beginning of the end. Tell me how you fare with yours. I fervently pray the God of the Poet to give you all such fire as you shall want. . . .

Charley joins me in love to you.

Your friend, SIDNEY LANIER.

142 EAST 18TH ST., *April* 3, 1876.

MY DEAR LANIER: I must write very hastily, as usual, for in addition to my regular work and extra business matters which come at this season, the Ode is pressing upon me with might, with might!

I don't wonder you were annoyed at the notice of your Cantata in the "Tribune." I was surprised when I saw it; but I have since ascertained how it came there. It is published by Schirmer, and was sent to Mr. —— to be noticed. The advertisement to-day says it will appear *shortly*. Mr. Buck must explain this: I cannot. Mr. ——, of course, supposed it was a legitimate subject to write about; and in talking with

him about it to-day, I learned incidentally that he meant no special criticism of the text, but only used what he thought necessary to illustrate the music. This does not lessen your grievance, but it ought to modify your expressions. I have marked with a pencil certain things which I earnestly beg you to omit. In such matters the man who betrays his exasperation puts himself at a disadvantage: the reading public *never* fully apprehends an author's position, and there are not fifty readers of the "Tribune" who would comprehend your annoyance sufficiently to sympathize with your rejoinder. Were it my case, my first thought would be to reply as you have done; my second thought would be, not to reply at all. One result will be the publication of the whole text at once, by other papers; since they can now so easily get it.

I am very sorry this has happened so; but I think the first blame belongs to the premature publication of the music (which includes the text). Since working on the "Tribune" I have learned how honest and amiable —— is by nature: he should not have quoted anything, but *I know* that he supposed he was free to do so. I knew nothing of the matter until after I saw the article in print.

I must break off. If I should not write to you again for three weeks, don't imagine I forget you, but my ideas for the Ode are gathering, and the distractions which interrupt them make me almost desperate. I shall probably be forced to run away from New York for a week or so.

Ever faithfully your friend,

BAYARD TAYLOR.

66 Centre St., Baltimore, *April* 4, 1876.

My dear Mr. Taylor: It suddenly occurs to me — apropos of your connection with the "Tribune" — that in sending you the article to read I may have rendered myself liable to a fancy on your part (for you have not known me very long) that I was trying in a roundabout way to secure some sort of interference by you in its, or my, behalf.

But, no! My only reason for sending you the piece was that I quite distrust my own judgment in such matters: I live so utterly alone that just as a deaf person forgets the proper intonations of voice in speaking, so I forget how matters look, and go, among men; and I therefore sent my article for your judgment and advice to me upon its propriety, knowing that you are more among men than I am. I never asked, and will never ask, help in such a matter; and, were this not so, I would ask it directly, or not at all.

By the grace of God my Centennial Ode is finished. I now only know how divine has been the agony of the last three weeks during which I have been rapt away to heights where all my own purposes as to a revisal of artistic forms lay clear before me, and where the sole travail was of choice out of multitude.

I hope to see you on Thursday, being called by business to New York. Of course you won't care to see my Ode until after you have written your own, — wherein may the God of the Artist detach His best angels to your service.

Your friend, S. L.

66 Centre St., Baltimore, Md., *April* 8, 1876.

My dear Mr. Taylor: From indications at Philadelphia yesterday I deem it of very great importance to me that some intelligent criticism of my poem should appear in a journal of standing. Without wishing to *guide* or in any way *direct* criticism, I am keenly desirous that the poem might be judged *on the plane of its principles*, leaving the critic the utmost freedom in pronouncing how far it has succeeded in carrying them out. I have not yet been able to tell you — in all our correspondence about the poem — what were the main considerations leading to its substance and form. Please let me do so now.

1st. The principal matter over which the United States can legitimately exult is *its present existence as a Republic*, in spite of so much opposition from Nature and from man. I therefore made the Refrain of the Song — about which all its train of thought moves — concern itself wholly with the *Fact of existence:* the waves cry "*It shall not be;*" the powers of nature cry "It shall not *be;*" the wars, etc. utter the same cry. This Refrain is the key to the whole poem.

2d. The poem was limited to sixty lines: in which space I had to compress the past and the future of the country, together with some reference to the present occasion. This necessitated the use of the highly generalized terms which occur, — as for instance when, in the "Good Angel's Song," the fundamental philosophies of Art, of Science, of Power, of Polity, of Faith, and of Social Life, are presented in the simple Saxon words, and in one line each.

3d. I wished that the poem might belie the old slander upon our tendency to Fourth of July uproari-

ousness, buncombe, spread-eagleism, and the like. I tried, therefore, to make it the *quietest* poem possible.

4th. A knowledge of the inability of music to represent any shades of meaning save those which are very intense, and very highly and sharply contrasted, led me to divide the poem into the eight paragraphs or movements which it presents, and to make these vividly opposed to each other in sentiment. Thus the first movement is reflection, measured and sober: this suddenly changes into the *agitato* of the second: this agitato, culminating in the unison shout "*No! It shall not be*," yields in the third movement to the pianissimo and meagre effect of the skeleton voices from Jamestown, etc: this *pianissimo* in the fourth movement is turned into a climax of the wars of armies and of faiths, again ending in the shout, "No!" etc.: the fifth movement opposes this with a *whispered* chorus — Huguenots whispering *Yea*, etc.: the sixth opposes again with loud exultation, "Now praise," etc.: the seventh opposes this with the single voice singing the Angels' song; and the last concludes the series of contrasts with a broad full chorus of measured and firm sentiment.

5th. So far I have spoken of the main circumstances determining the substance of the poem. The metrical forms were selected purely with reference to their descriptive nature: the four trochaic feet of the opening strophe measure off reflection, the next (Mayflower) strophe swings and yaws like a ship, the next I made outré and bizarre and bony simply by the device of interposing the line of two and a half trochees amongst the four trochee lines: the swift action of the Huguenot strophe of course required dactyls: and having thus

kept the first part of the poem (which describes the time *before* we were a real nation) in metres which are as it were exotic to our tongue, I now fall into the Iambic metre — which is the genius of English words — as soon as the Nation becomes secure and firm.

6th. My business as member of the orchestra for three years having caused me to sit immediately in front of the bassoons, I had often been struck with the possibility of producing the ghostly effects of that part of the bassoon register so well known to students of Berlioz and Meyerbeer — by the use of the syllable *ee* sung by a chorus. With this view I filled the ghostly Jamestown Stanza with *ee*'s, — and would have put in more if I could have found them appropriate to the sense.

Now let me ask your friendship two questions.

1st. Is there any *proper* way in which you could call the attention of the "Tribune" literary critic — whenever my poem as poem is to be noticed — to these considerations I have above enumerated? Would it be trespassing either upon his, my, or your position, if you should hand him what I have written above?

2d. In view of the fact that the poem is now printed with the piano score and is liable at any time to be copied — and copied badly — by other papers, would it not be well for me if it were printed by the "Tribune" properly?

In fine, I am convinced that if one influential paper would take the initiative in judging the poem from the above standpoint, all the loose opinion would crystallize

about it; and, if not, I shall be cruelly misjudged and mistreated.

Two reflections make me bold enough to ask this of you: first, that I would so gladly embrace any opportunity of giving you my love in this or any other way: and, second, that I feel as if the great wrong done me by Mr. ——'s criticism gave me a half-right and claim upon the paper. If the enclosed letter of Dudley Buck's[1] would be of any service in this connection, let it be.

[1] 100 WEST 54TH ST., *April* 4, 1876.

MY DEAR MR. LANIER,—I am sorry that the "Tribune" article gave you pain, but after you have been dissected, flayed, and otherwise disposed of as many times as I have been, you will not wince at one newspaper article. No, I did not find the poem so difficult to set as it strikes the critic of the "Tribune," whose article was as great a surprise to me as to yourself. The "pitfalls" referred to were rather godsends in my case, with exception of the (2) Jamestown and Plymouth lines. The tough spot for me was the first verse, after which everything seemed to fall into shape of its own accord. It is not a matter of number of feet or kind of verse with me, so much as whether *I take a fancy* to a poem — which I did in your case.

Since the work appeared and the rehearsals commenced in Philadelphia, I have of course heard a multitude of expressions in regard to the poem, and find that my original judgment of its effect on various minds is correct — *viz.*, the more intelligence (more particularly in the line of poetry) a person possesses the better he likes it. Several have said to me "these words grow upon me every time I read them." One person in particular astonished me at the first rehearsal by saying, after reading them through once, that he could n't understand them. It was a person of intelligence. I remarked simply that I thought he had better give the poem two or three readings. He came to me last week, and said he wanted to take back what he had said about the poem, and he too remarked as above in regard to their growing upon him. This trait is certainly true of a vast number of the best

Buck showed me Mr. Whittier's hymn yesterday, which was just received. I noticed *the* two lines.[1] It is good.

I trust with perfect confidence to your candor in this matter, — if my request seem bizarre, or in any the least wise improper.

God bless you.

Your friend, SIDNEY LANIER.

P. S. I should like it to be stated that I have been a member of the Peabody Orchestra for three years, under Asger Hamerik. S. L.

April 11, 1876.

MY DEAR LANIER: I have spoken to Reid about your Cantata, and he thinks that under the circumstances it would be well to publish it. There can be no objection, as it is already in the hands of the chorus, and may appear in print at any day. I shall therefore write an appropriate and explanatory introduction to-

things by the best men, — I think eminently so in case of Tennyson.

It was this which made me so desirous to have the poem printed in advance of the music. Then it would have been studied and analyzed *per se*, and they would have gotten at the merits of it quicker. Why this was not permitted has always been beyond my comprehension. In a word I think the intelligence of the country will be on your side, and about the rest I would not trouble myself. Be therefore comforted and write me a dramatic cantata!

Have you any "*bits*" lying about that would do for songs?

In haste — Very truly yours,

DUDLEY BUCK.

[1] Used by Mr. Whittier from Mr. Taylor's Hymn (written before he was commissioned to prepare the Ode). See Pickard's Life of Whittier.

day, and it will probably appear to-morrow. I cannot go quite as much into technical details as you may desire, or as I should do under other circumstances, since I write for the same paper and in the same editorial form as the musical criticism. But I shall do my best to set other papers upon the track of a right understanding. I trust you will understand the restrictions under which I must write: I am not *free*. Perhaps you had better hint to Gen. Hawley that the publication has your sanction.

In great haste, as I go to Phila. to-morrow, and the Ode — the Ode —

Ever B. T.

These are the last references in the correspondence to the criticisms and ridicule of the Centennial Cantata, which, as shown here, gave Mr. Lanier no little pain at the time. This was due, however, far less to personal sensitiveness than to the feeling that his critics were falsifying before the public principles of art which seemed to him vital; and it was to combat what he believed to be an obscuring of fundamental truth that he finally sent to one of the New York newspapers a complete statement of his conception (which appears in the recent volume of collected essays, Music and Poetry).

In the early part of July, 1876, Mr. Lanier was in Philadelphia for a few days, at the time when his first volume of poems (containing "Corn," "The Symphony," "The Psalm of the West," "In Absence," "Acknowledgment," "Betrayal," Special Pleading," "To Charlotte Cushman," "Rose Morals," and "To ——, with a Rose,"

with the dedicatory stanzas to Charlotte Cushman) was published by the Lippincotts. He was just recovering from a sharp attack of the disease which he was to fight continuously for the next five years, but the cheerful serenity brought him by his growing power in his art is written large over the hint of physical distress in the next letter: —

1425 Walnut St., Philadelphia, Pa., *July*, 1876.

My dear Mr. Taylor: I write a mere note to say, in answer to your kind inquiry about my volume, that Mr. Peacock bought up a copy yesterday which had just been sent to the Bulletin Office, from which I presume that the book is now published. I 've been here (at the Peacocks') for several days very ill, and have not seen the publishers in a long time — which accounts for my lack of more precise knowledge. The book is called simply "Poems, By S. L." I 'll have a copy sent you as soon as I get out.

I 'm glad to find that the lectures are swelling your purse. I hope the golden shower will thicken until the Bureau shall represent a substantial Jupiter and you a well-satisfied Danaë.

I found pleasure in learning from your letter that the "Evening Post" had copied the sonnets. I can't tell you with what ravishing freedom and calmness I find myself writing, in these days, nor how serene and sunny the poetic region seems to lie, in front, like broad upland fields and slopes. I write all the time, and sit down to the paper with the poems already done. I hope to have out another volume soon of work which will show a much quieter technique than this one. A modern French writer has spoken of the works of the

great Artists of the world as being like the high white clouds which sail calmly over a green valley on a summer day. This seems to me very beautiful.

If you should write within a week, address me here: afterwards at West Chester, as usual.

My wife would join me, if she were here, in cordial messages to you and Mrs. Taylor. We have been hearing some very fine stories of you from your true friend and admirer Mrs. Roberts (*née* Anderson), at whose house in West Philadelphia we have been staying, to see the Exhibition.

Your friend, S. L.

West Chester, Pa., *July* 19, 1876.

My dear Mr. Taylor: I 'm just crawling back into some sort of shambling activity after a very depressing illness; and my congratulations on the success of your Ode will therefore not be considered by you as too late to enter in.

I found that General Hawley had been kind enough to send me an invitation to the platform; but it did not arrive until some days after the event, having been sent to Baltimore and forwarded from several other addresses before finally reaching me. I hear, however, the most pleasant accounts of the complete success both of your matter and your manner on the "stately day" from Mr. Peacock. My retired position — we are boarding at a farmhouse about a mile from West Chester, Mr. Thompson's — has rather taken me out of range of the newspapers, and I have seen no newspaper account of the ceremonies except the Philadelphia "Bulletin's." I sincerely hope that the malice which you thought likely might seize this opportunity to vent

itself has recoiled before the calm and noble front of your ode. I have not seen or heard any evidences of its activity.

My wife sends you all manner of pleasant messages, which I should detail if I were strong enough to do much writing. Please keep me in fair remembrance with Mrs. Taylor and your daughter.

My address is simply "West Chester," where I have a box at the P. O. I hope you are not now so busy as before the Fourth and are finding some time to rest.

Your faithful S. L.

N. Y., *July* 21, 1876.

My dear Lanier: I'm very glad to hear from you. Am nearly dead from heat and unending work, and can only thank you for your kind congratulations. The Ode made an impression which amazed me: it is something worth living for. Of course all sneers are powerless now: but they are on hand!

I expect to make Cedarcroft my home for ten days, beginning about a fortnight from now; and then you must come over and spend a day with me.

Where is Thompson's? My kindest greeting to Mrs. Lanier.

Fluidly, yet faithfully, B. T.

West Chester, Pa., *September* 21, 1876.

My dear Mr. Taylor: In spite of the rejected poem which your letter contained, I was glad — O Might of Friendship (for I fondly expected twenty-five dollars instead of this MS.)! — to get your little message. I don't at all know why they sent it to *you*;

the poem contained my address plainly written on the last page. It was making you *particeps criminis*. In order that you may see the unrelieved blackness of their (*i. e.*, Dr. Holland's) guilt, I send you the poem and message accompanying, which you can read in some little by-time when you've nothing better to do.

As to pen and ink, and all toil, I've been almost suppressed by continual illness. I can't tell you how much I sigh for some quiet evenings at the Century where I might hear some of you talk about the matters I love, or merely sit and think in the atmosphere of the thinkers. I fancy one can almost come to know the dead thinkers too well: a certain mournfulness of longing seems sometimes to peer out from behind one's joy in one's Shakespeare and one's Chaucer, — a sort of physical protest and yearning of the living eye for its like. Perhaps one's friendship with the dead poets comes indeed to acquire something of the quality of worship, through the very mystery which withdraws them from us and which allows no more messages from them, cry how we will, after that sudden and perilous Stoppage. I hope those are not illegitimate moods in which one sometimes desires to surround oneself with a companionship less awful, and would rather have a friend than a god.

May joins me in begging to be kept in remembrance by the ladies of your house.

Don't take the trouble of returning the poem. I've another copy.

Your friend, SIDNEY L.

142 East 18th St., New York, *September* 23, 1876.

My dear Lanier: I've read your poem over several times, and am quite clear about it. The title, "The Waving of the Corn," is slightly fantastic, rather than fanciful, and the word, or act, of *waving* is too weak for a refrain. The last stanza is quite unnecessary: it drops out of the tone of the three preceding ones, forces a moral where none is needed, and is in no sense poetical. *Voilà tout!* I don't know that precisely these things decided Dr. Holland; but I feel pretty sure that he would have accepted the poem had they not been. The rest is so sweet, tranquil, and beautiful, that it has the best right *to be*, without a moral. Now, don't take offence, but let me make the changes in your MS. and send with this, just to show you — not how *I* should have written it (our ways are not the same, you know), but how I think *you* should have written it. The feeling of peace and blissful pastoral seclusion is so exquisitely expressed that the poem should be restricted to that only.

Best greetings to your wife from both of us.

Ever faithfully,

Bayard Taylor.

I think I could get the "Galaxy" to take the poem.

West Chester, Pa., *October* 6, 1876.

My dear Mr. Taylor: I've been absent in Baltimore, and this will explain my delay in writing to thank you for the evident trouble you were at in behalf of my poem. Your somewhat serious defence of Dr. Holland leads me to fear, a little, that you misunderstood my allusion to his "criminality," etc. in rejecting the poem — which I meant for the merest joke. A good deal of experience in these matters renders it quite impossible for

me to have any *feeling* as to the judgment of any given person upon the merits of a poem, or its availability for magazine purposes: for I have seen that these judgments depend upon two elements which are infinitely variable: the mood of the person judging, and the particular idea which he may have formed in his mind of that phantasm called the General Public. Certainly nothing can be more striking than the perpetual reversal of such decrees by time and the popular tide; and the day is quite past when I could be in the least disturbed by any contemporary judgment either as to the artistic quality, or probable popularity, of a poem.

I am thus didactically particular for the reason that you really seemed to think I was cherishing enmity against the —— gentlemen, whereas the fact is that I feel greatly obliged to them for a general reception of my little offerings far more hearty than I could expect, in view of our wholly different ways of looking at things.

And as for your prefacing your own suggestions with "Now don't take offence, but," etc. — nothing could be more absurd, — offence, indeed!

I find myself agreeing with two of your verbal criticisms on "The Waving of the Corn" (the "haply undainty" and the equivocal "faint"), and though not agreeing at all with your condemnation of the last stanza, I think I will strike it out as likely to produce a disagreeable impression of moralizing. In reality it is a vigorous carrying out of the idea of *personal* tranquillity; advancing beyond that to the conception of the larger tranquillity of *Society*.

It's very good of you to offer to try the "Galaxy," but I would n't like the poem to win a place in print upon any influence save its own merits; and if this

objection were disposed of, I could not bear to think of giving such trouble to so busy a man as I know you to be.

Pray tell me of Deucalion and Pyrrha. Have the world, the flesh, and the devil completely crowded the sweet typic Man and Woman to the wall? I hope you manage to escape into their larger realm sometimes.

Will you probably be lecturing in Baltimore this winter? It now seems likely I will hibernate there. My wife joins me in warm messages to you and Mrs. Taylor.

Your faithful, S. L.

West Chester, Pa., *October* 22, 1876.

Dear Mr. Taylor: I hope you 'll like these enclosed sonnets,[1] from the November number of "Lippincott's" just out. I believe I think more of the two first than of anything I have done; the last two are redactions of two earlier ones which I think you have seen in manuscript.

I hope you and Mrs. Taylor are well. I suppose Miss Lilian is away at Vassar by this time.

Your friend, S. L.

142 East 18th St., New York, *November* 15, 1876.

My dear Lanier: I write now in order that this may catch you in Philadelphia. It 's very pleasant to get such good news (barring the illness) of your poetic activity. All poets have *periods*, and you are just passing from one into another. I have seen and felt this, but did not say so, because I was not sure whether you quite knew it yourself; but *now* I may freely say that I

[1] "Acknowledgments."

comprehend the change and rejoice in it for your sake. I am especially glad to hear that you are thinking already of a new volume: the technique is really an important matter — as much so in verse as in sculpture.

I await the volume with real interest, although I probably know the whole of it already. But poems, somehow, have a different atmosphere when they are collected and placed side by side; so I shall be sure to get new views of your achievement.

As for myself, the lectures are not over-abundant. If I save enough during the whole winter to take me to the Sulphur Springs of Virginia for two months next summer, I must be satisfied. I am quite fagged and wearied, — incapable of poetry, — hardly capable of my routine work on the "Tribune."

I caught a severe cold at Philadelphia, on the 10th, my wife is not well, and we hear of nothing but accidents or deaths in the family; — this is my regular season for bad news, and I cannot expect anything cheering until the winter solstice is over and the sun begins to return. I am not naturally despondent, but it's a little hard to keep cheerful when one is physically depressed.

Give my love to Peacock, whom I shall be always most glad to see here, whenever he comes this way. I have lately found a new friend in the "Portland Press" (apparently a woman), a critic of rare insight and sympathy. But I have also a word of cheer for you: I see that you are finding quiet friends, genuine appreciators — therefore, *Sursum corda!* All will be right in the end.

Ever faithfully yours,

BAYARD TAYLOR.

1425 Walnut St., Philadelphia, Pa.,
November 24, 1876.

My dear Mr. Taylor: A peculiar affection of the side has almost incapacitated me for any use of the pen, temporarily; but I must send you a little note in order to share with you — for I would like you to have half of *all* my good things in this world — the pleasure which your generous notice in the "Tribune" has given me. I recognized it as yours at once; and I therefore did not stint myself in my enjoyment of its appreciative expressions any more than I would mar my smoking of your cigars, or my drinking of your wine, with *arrières pensées* — for I knew that the one was as free as the other.

I was particularly pleased with the light way in which you touched upon my faults; and I say this not hastily, but upon a principle to which I 've given a good deal of meditation. The more I think of it, the more I am convinced that every genuine artist may be safely trusted with his own defects. I feel perfectly sure that there are stages of growth — particularly with artists of very great sensibility who live remote from the business life of men — in which one's habitual faults are already apt to be unhealthily exaggerated from within; and the additional forcings of such a tendency from without, through perpetual reminders of shortcomings, becomes positively hurtful, by proud-fleshing the artistic conscience and making it unnaturally timid and irritable. In looking around at the publications of the younger American poets I am struck with the circumstance that none of them even *attempt* anything great. The morbid fear of doing something wrong or unpolished appears to have influenced their choice of subjects. Hence the endless multiplication of those little feeble magazine-lyrics which

we all know: consisting of one minute idea, each, which is put in the last line of the fourth verse, the other three verses and three lines being mere sawdust and surplusage.

It seems to me to be a fact bearing directly upon all this, that if we inquire who are the poets that must be read with the greatest allowances we find them to be precisely the *greatest poets*. What enormous artistic crimes do we have continually to pardon in Homer, Dante, Shakespeare! How often is the first utterly dull and long-winded, the second absurdly credulous and superstitious, the third overdone and fantastical! But we have long ago settled all this, we have forgiven them their sins, we have ceased to place emphasis upon the matters in which they displease us; and when we recall their works our minds instinctively confine remembrance to their beauties only. And applying this principle to the great exemplars of the other arts besides poetry, I think we find no exception to the rule that as to the great artist, we always have to take him *cum onere*.

I have to send you my thanks very often: I hope they don't become monotonous to you. Your praise has really given me a great deal of genuine and fruitful pleasure. The truth is that, as for censure, I am overloaded with my own: but as for commendation I am mainly in a state of famine; so that while I cannot, for very surfeit, profitably digest the former, I have such a stomach for the latter as would astonish gods and men.

Your last note gave me pain, with hints of calamity in your family, and of your own need of physical rest. You won't laugh if I tell you — apropos of my haunting desire to see you at liberty from the shackles of daily bread and free to work entirely upon poetry — that I was yesterday half-dreaming, alone, in my sick-chair,

that my portion of the Jennings estate in England (to which I am really one of the chief heirs) had arrived, and I had just addressed you a little note stating that in a certain bank of New York there was deposited to your credit the sum of —— thousand (I held over this blank to fill up at my leisure) dollars which I begged you would use, if for no other reason at least to save me the trouble of thinking what else to do with it, — the same to be repaid some time or other in heaven; — where gold would be plenty and cheap — when I awoke without even having had the pleasure of filling out the blank.

And this is a fearsome long screed for what started to be a "note." But you will pardon this as you would pardon any other fault in

Your faithful true friend, S. L.

1425 Walnut St., Philadelphia, Pa.,
November 29, 1876.

Dear Mr. Taylor: I want to try the Editor of "Harper's Magazine" with the poem in enclosed envelope. I don't even know who *is* the editor: will you be kind enough to address the envelope and mail it for me?

Yours containing the "Evening Post" notice came, and was "accepted with thanks." Who is the Literary Editor of the "Post"? Is it Mr. George C. Eggleston, as I think I have been told?

I'm better and go to Baltimore on Monday, to fulfill orchestral engagement. Letters will reach me still if addressed to West Chester, where my wife will remain for some time; my Baltimore address will be 40 Mt. Vernon Place.

I hope you are well. Pray commend me to Mrs. Taylor. I 'm writing hastily. I stay with the Peacocks until Sunday afternoon.

Your friend, S. L.

WESTMINSTER HOTEL, 4 *Afternoon, Wednesday.*

MY DEAR FRIEND: I 'm going to be in my room here for the balance of the day and evening. If you have n't anything better to do, pray come to me. I wish to see you particularly. Your letter reached me yesterday morning just before I left Baltimore.

My regards to Mrs. Taylor, — which I would present in person, but it is too cold for me to venture out.

Your faithful S. L.

1425 WALNUT ST., PHILADELPHIA, PA.,
December 6, 1876.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: My physician has become alarmed at the gravity and persistence of my illness and orders me immediately to Florida, denouncing death unless a warm climate is speedily reached. He might as well talk to the stars whose light has n't yet reached us, as try to persuade me that any conceivable combination of circumstances could induce me to die before I 've written and published my five additional volumes of poems; nevertheless it is decided that my wife is to leave here with me on Monday night next, for Florida, and I 'm scratching this hasty note, in the possibility that your nomadic habits might bring you to Philadelphia within that time, simply to ask that you won't fail — if they should bring you here — to give me a final sight of you. I 'm still at the Peacocks'.

I hope you did n't take cold at Greenwood the other day. My wife would join me in messages to you and

Mrs. Taylor, but she ran over to New York this morning on a flying business visit for a couple of days.

Many thanks for the "Post" notice.

Your friend, S. L.

TAMPA, FLA., *January* 11, 1877.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: What would I not give to transport you from your frozen sorrows instantly into the midst of the green leaves, the gold oranges, the glitter of great and tranquil waters, the liberal friendship of the sun, the heavenly conversation of robins and mocking-birds and larks, which fill my days with delight!

But if I commence in this strain I shall never have done; and I am writing in full rebellion against the laws now of force over the land of Me — which do not yet allow me to use the few by reason of the infirmity of my lung; yet I could not help sending you some little greeting for the New Year, with a violet and a rose which please find herewithin. The violet is for purity, — and I wish that you may be pure all this year; and the rose is for love — and I 'm sure I shall love you all the year.

We are quite out of the world and know not its doings. The stage which brings our mail (twice a week only) takes three days to reach the railroad at Gainesville; and it is a matter of from nine days to any conceivable time for a letter to reach here from New York. Nevertheless, — nay, all the more therefore, — send me a line that I may know how you fare, body and soul.

I received a check for fifteen dollars from Mr. Alden, Editor "Harper's," for the poem you sent to him; and I make little doubt that I owe its acceptance to the circumstance that you sent it. I hear of an "Inter-

national Review," but have not seen any copy of it: do you think it would care for anything like the enclosed? —a poem which I have endeavored to make burn as hotly as, yet with a less highly colored flame than, others of mine. If you do, pray direct the envelope; if not, address it to the "Galaxy," unless you think that inadvisable: in which last event keep the copy, if you like.

I had a very cordial letter from Mr. Eggleston about my volume of poems, which gave me pleasure.

I 'm sure you 'll be glad to know that I improve decidedly; I see no reason to doubt that I shall be soon at work again. In truth, I "bubble song" continually during these heavenly days, and it is as hard to keep me from the pen as a toper from his tipple.

I hope Mrs. Taylor is well, and beg you to commend me to her; wherein my wife very heartily joins me, as well as in fair messages to you. I wrote you several times before leaving Philadelphia: did you get the letters?

Your faithful friend, S. L.

142 E. 18th St., New York, *January* 27, 1877.

My dear Lanier: I have been away, lecturing and snow-bound, cold and hungry, among the drifts of Central New York, and come back to find your most welcome letter, written on my birthday (though you did n't know it!), with the smell of the violet and rose as fresh — for about five minutes — as when you gathered them. Something of the endless summer of Tampa came to me in your letter, and I am still full of the longing to be beside those blue waters and where "im dunken Land die Gold-Orangen glühn."

Last night I spent with Stedman and Dudley Buck, and we talked much of you. Buck played the accompaniment, and Mr. Brown (a barytone) sang your last song in "Scribner's" — "The Cleopatra-night;" so that I have heard it before you! It is simply superb.

I shall send your poem immediately to the "Galaxy." The "International Review" is a mean concern, — publishes little poetry, pays its authors next to nothing, and has n't much circulation. I know Church of the "Galaxy," and am free to ask him, not only to publish the poem, but also to pay you properly. If I see him to-night at the Century I can settle the matter in two minutes. If you have anything more, of a simple, melodious quality, send it to me, and I 'm much mistaken if I can't get it into the "Atlantic." Your song in "Scribner's" was much copied. In the "New Library of Song," to which Bryant's name is attached as editor, — though he does n't edit it much, — your Cantata is published beside Whittier's Hymn and my Ode. So pluck up heart, and don't be discouraged! We must all wait.

I wish I had time to send you the MSS. of two late poems I have written, — "An Assyrian Chant" and "Peach-Blossom." I have two or three more waiting for the lucky hour — but, Alas! Ah me! Eheu! Ay de mi! — I am ground to the dust with work and worry. I live from day to day, on the verge of physical prostration. Nothing saves me but 8 to 10 hours of death-like sleep, every night. Of course everything must wait — my "Life of Goethe," my lyrical drama, everything that is solely and dearly mine.

You missed a letter I sent to Baltimore. I called at your address there, saw Hamerik, and finally got your

last note from Philadelphia after you left. As I did n't know your address, I meant to write to Peacock; and you must pardon my seeming neglect. Buck told me last night he had recently written to you at West Chester! I gave him your address, and he will write at once. I am to hammer out some sort of a song for him: may the Lord help me to something musical! Did you see my "Matin-Song" in the January "Atlantic"? — Paine's music.

Here 's the end of the sheet, and I must close, for I have not the time to fill another. Do write often, but only when you are allowed. Your condition makes me very anxious, for you have the truest right to life and strength. Pray Heaven the trouble is only temporary! My wife joins me in love to yours and you.

Ever affectionately, BAYARD TAYLOR.

142 E. 18TH ST., NEW YORK, *February* 5, 1877.

MY DEAR LANIER, — I enclose Sheldon & Co.'s ("Galaxy") check for $25, for your "Beethoven." I tried hard to get $40 for it, but failed. I have also carefully read the proof, and was much tempted to change a word — "The slanders *told* by sickly eyes" — but it seemed too great a liberty. However, I did make one or two necessary changes in punctuation.

I saw Buck again, six days ago. He had just received a letter from you, saying you are much better, — which I was heartily glad to hear. I wish you could have been here Saturday evening to hear Wagner's "Götterdämmerung" — not that *I* liked it! I 'm through with my outside lecturing, — we have soft airs, and clear spring skies, and all my fatigues are falling off me like a snake's old skin. I hope to come out (poetically) in new and

shining scales. Send me a poem for the "Atlantic." Pardon haste: we both greet you both.

Ever faithfully, BAYARD TAYLOR.

TAMPA, FLA., *February* 7, 1877.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: Your letter bringing many pleasant words, came *on* my birthday: which I consider a fair reciprocation for mine, written (as you tell me) on yours. My wife had managed to arrange my room, with the help of some cunning female friends, without my knowledge; and when I awoke in the morning I found myself in the midst of a very brave array of flowers; during the day our apartment was further hung with wreaths of gray moss, bamboo vines, and fragrant spruce pine tassels, to such a degree that I felt like a whole Sunday-school celebration all by myself; and in the afternoon among a lot of pleasant mail matter came your letter.

I was never able to stay angry in my life; and I should meet —— without ever letting him know how much pain he had given me. . . . It only increased the pain of the wound that it was given in this advisory way which would have made me seem very truculent to resent it; and there was nothing to do but get off into some brake of silence, like a deer with a shot in the flank, and lick mine own wound. This seems extravagant; but it is not, compared with the real suffering: it was *such* a fall for my vanity to think that any human being could have dreamed me capable of such a thought, after having seen me twice!

Voilà tout. As for forgiveness: the summer and the silence here have been very medicinal to me: since I have been here I 've thought over the few people that

ever wronged me, and I don't find in my heart the least speck of hard feeling against anybody in the world.

Pray keep the enclosed little poem, and send it anywhere where you think it might be accepted. I should mention that Scribner's, Harper's, and Lippincott's, each, has a poem of mine on hand (and you 'll care to hear that Scribner's paid me twice as much as ever before for the last one, bought a couple of weeks ago). Don't charge your mind with it, and pray don't be at the trouble of writing any recommendations, or the like. I cannot bear to think of taking your time.

My wife is trying to get off a small box of orange blossoms to Mrs. Taylor by this mail, but she may have to wait over until the next.

Have you seen a somewhat elaborate notice of me in the "Graphic" by Orpheus C. Kerr?

I should like to see your "Assyrian Chant" and specially "Peach-Blossom." If you could only see the plum-trees, the roses, the orange-blossoms, here!

God bless you.

Your friend, S. L.

TAMPA, FLA., *February* 11, 1877.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: In the poem I've just sent you — "The Bee" — it occurs to me that I have carelessly used the pronoun "him" referring to the bee, — forgetting that, although the worker-bees were formerly thought to be sexless, they have recently been found to be imperfectly developed females. Pray let me trouble you therefore to substitute "its" for "his" in the sixteenth line from the beginning,

"Thrust up its sad-gold body lustily";

and also "it" for "him" in the thirty-sixth line from the beginning,

"Perceived it poising o'er a fresh new cup."

I am too in some little doubt about the words "*on his wings*," six lines further on from the last quoted: ("He hath a sense of pollen on his wings.") While I know that the pollen used by the bee *for food* is carried in the "pollen-baskets" of the legs, I am not sure whether any of the pollen used in cross-fertilization is carried *on the wings*, my impression is that it mostly adheres *to the body*. Perhaps therefore it would be better to substitute for this line the following:

"Some sense of pollen every poet brings,"
(Of pollen for to make thee fruitful, etc., etc.)

To how many sins one sin leadeth . . . is shown in all this trouble I 'm giving you in consequence of failing to be strictly accurate at first.

I write in great haste, to save a mail.

Your friend, S. L.

TAMPA, FLA., *February* 25, 1877.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: Yours with the "Galaxy" check came safely, bringing me heaviness of purse and lightness of heart, — for both of which pray hold yourself thanked.

About the piece for the ——, I am afflicted with doubts which I find myself unable to solve. Once in my early pleiocene epoch, before the Man had appeared in any of my formations to supplant the crude monsters of earlier periods, I sent "Corn" to Mr. ——; and, upon his refusing it, I tried, some time afterwards, a

couple of sonnets, accompanied by a note asking (poor green goose that I was! as if an editor had time for such things, — but I really knew no better) if he would not do me the favor to point out in these a certain "mysticism" of which he had complained in "Corn." This he did not answer: only returning the two poor little sonnets with the usual printed refusal.

This looked so much like a pointed invitation to me to let him alone that I have never had the courage to trouble him since. I thought his treatment very cold at that time, and wrote so, once, to ——, who had been friends of mine. Of course I now see how absurdly callow and unreasonable were my views then; but this does not diminish the mortification with which I remember the ignominious termination of my efforts in that direction; and while I do not retain the least spark of feeling against Mr. ——, I do not feel at all sure but *he* may remember *me* as an absurd person whom he was obliged to rebuff by silence. What would *you* do? I'm sure I do not want to be finical.

We got off some orange-blossoms to Mrs. Taylor last week, but I much doubt if the buds will open on the way, according to my wife's expectation. They have made a very pretty heaven indeed for the bees and for us during the last two weeks.

I have occasional backsets, due to the warm climate; but there is now no doubt the lung is healing rapidly, and I am much better. I hope your project for the German lectures (which I saw announced in the "Evening Post") has been successful. What a foolish noise is this about "Deirdrè"! It is just a poor dull piece of orthodox verse. I do not find an *idea* in it, from beginning to end; and the imitations of Homer's ideas affect

me unpleasantly. Moreover the story is too little for an epic. There is n't wind enough for so much canvas: whereby the latter is pot-bellied, and bags absurdly.

My wife joins me in affectionate messages to you and Mrs. Taylor. I wish I could gossip a little; but mine infirmity of the pen-arm saith, Forbear.

Your friend, S. L.

TAMPA, *March* 4, 1877.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: I earnestly hope you 'll like this: it is written with a very full heart![1] I wanted to say all manner of fair things about you, but I was so intensely afraid of appearing to *plaster* you, — that I finally squeezed them all into one line,

"In soul and stature larger than thy kind,"

which in truth has kept saying itself over within me ever since it was written, until I have come to take infinite satisfaction in it.

If you like this well enough to be willing that I should print it, pray give me a hint in what direction I had better send it, — I mean, where you would best like it to appear.

I have just seen the "Beethoven" in the "Galaxy." A queer mistake in punctuation occurs when it says:

"When luminous lightnings blindly strike ;
The sailor praying on his knees
Along with him that 's cursing God" etc.

The semicolon marked is an error: the verb "strike" governs "The sailor," etc. in the following line; the luminous lightnings blindly strike (not only) the sailor praying, etc., but also the sailor cursing, etc. I speak of

[1] "Under the Cedarcroft Chestnut."

.t as a queer error because I am amused to see that a sort of dim sense may be evolved out of it even as it stands. On seeing the poem in print, I find it faulty: there 's too much matter in it; it is like reading the dictionary — the meanings presently become confused, not because of any lack of distinctness in each one, but simply because of the numerous and differing specifications of ideas.

Did you get a letter from me enclosing a poem called "The Bee"?

But I must stop writing. God bless you.

Your friend, S. L.

NEW YORK, *March* 12, 1877.
(*You know the address.*)

MY DEAR LANIER: Drudgery, drudgery, drudgery! What else can I say? Does not that explain all? Two courses of twelve lectures on German Literature here and at Brooklyn, daily work on the "Tribune," magazine articles (one dismally delayed), interruptions of all sorts, — and just as much conscience as you may imagine pressing upon me to write to you and other friends! The fact is, I am so weary, fagged, with sore spots under the collar-bone, and all sorts of indescribable symptoms which betoken lessened vitality, that I must piteously beg you to grant me much allowance.

I got your second letter about "The Bee" just in time, for I had meant to send it to —— that very morning. What you said made me pause for a few days; but I have at last decided to send it none the less, and it will go to-morrow morning! I see no other place for it. The poem is very charming. I shall make the changes you desire, although *je n'en vois pas la né-*

cessité. You see, I admit your full right; but not one man in 10,000,000 will know enough about bees to notice any scientific mistake. I must send you a long magazine article I have just written on Tennyson to illustrate the fault of over-attention to details. You are right about the "Beethoven," — it is too crowded, and the ideas are not clearly expressed. I must say frankly ("which" should not) that the Chestnut-tree is very fine: only *do* say something else instead of "colic." Three hundred years ago a poet could say that; not now. And I would not put the stanzas in *italic:* it is so far from the fashion of the day, that people will think it equivalent to the author saying, "Mark how fine this is!" We must yield something to the custom, just as we wear horrid stove-pipe hats. I return it, because, as you well understand, *I* can't offer it anywhere; yet I am sure Scribner would publish it. Why not change the title to "The Chestnut-Tree at (or of) Cedarcroft"? It seems a little less personal. The line you mention *is* fine, apart from mine own interest in it, — too good as applied to me. Somehow I feel as if such things might be said after a man is dead, hardly while he is living. But that *you* feel impelled to say it now, gives me a feeling of dissolving warmth about the heart. You must not think, my dear friend, that simply because I recognize your genius and character, and the purity of the aims of both, that I confer any obligation on you! From you, and all like you, few as they are, I draw my own encouragement for that work of mine which I think may possibly live.

My wife wrote to Mrs. Lanier to-day, and I meant to have enclosed this; but I hope it won't be long behind. I shall get through my lectures about the 10th of April,

and if I still feel as worn and weary as now, may go South for a fortnight, and as far as Florida. Where shall you be then? In Macon? It 's all uncertain, but if I go I 'll stop and see you. Don't count on this: it 's a private hope of mine, and may be frustrated.

I have a great many more things to say, but you 'll pardon me. I am deadly tired, and hardly know how I 've kept up the past year without breaking down utterly. But I must at least tell you how glad I am always to hear from you, — how I pray for your restoration to enough of health to do the work God meant you to do.

Ever faithfully and affectionately your friend,

BAYARD TAYLOR.

TAMPA, FLA., *March* 29, 1877.

DEAR MR. TAYLOR: I cut this slip out of an "Evening Post" which comes in the same mail with your letter of the 12th. Both tell the same story: that you are overworked.

For this reason I rejoice to learn that you think of running away for a little while from New York, and — without waiting to answer your letter — I write a line by return mail to say that at the time you mention I will be in Brunswick, Ga. There is a route to Florida — perhaps the quickest and pleasantest — which passes through Brunswick. It is called the "Cumberland Route" (from passing by Cumberland Island, on the Georgia coast, between Brunswick and Fernandina, Fla.), and is the one by which I travelled last time. You take a sleeping-car at New York which brings you through to Danville, Va.; there you find another sleeping-car which brings you all the way to Brunswick

without change. At Brunswick you take a steamer to Fernandina, forty-five miles, and at Fernandina cars for Jacksonville, sixty-seven miles. If you are coming to Florida, you would probably be best pleased at St. Augustine. Pray write me a line when you receive this, telling me whether you 'll come through Brunswick. My address henceforth is "Care of Chas. Day, Brunswick, Ga." We leave here for that place on the 5th of April.

Your friend, S. L.

142 E. 18TH ST., NEW YORK, *April* 15, 1877.

MY DEAR LANIER: I am very glad to get yours of March 29th, from which I infer (though you don't say so) that you must be better. Since my two lecture courses are over, and I have stopped magazine work, I am getting fresher and stronger, and have decided to go to Cedarcroft instead of Florida! This will be better; for a single week in Florida, balanced by another week of hard travel, would not do me much good. Besides, the house at Cedarcroft is being thoroughly repaired and I must have an eye to the work.

—— returned "The Bee" along with my "Assyrian Night Song," having no mind for either. But for this fact, I should regret having sent yours. I have several times half resolved never to send him another poem; but now I wholly resolve. He has personal whim in place of clear critical judgment. I shall next try —— with a better hope of success.

Pray let me know what your plans are — especially what your physical condition is, — where you expect to pass the summer, etc. I must go to Cornell University for ten days in May — shall work here until July 1st, then take a holiday for July and August, spending the

former month at the White Sulphur, Va. My over-work comes solely from the necessity of providing means for this necessary summer rest. But now the end is secured, and I shall take life more easily.

There 's no literary news to send. My wife joins me in friendliest greetings to yours.

Ever faithfully, BAYARD TAYLOR.

BRUNSWICK, GA., *April* 26, 1877.

DEAR MR. TAYLOR: Pray don't trouble to send "The Bee" to "——'s." I have n't the least idea of letting you act as poem-broker for me any longer. I 'm now getting well enough to write a little, and May (that 's my wife) is becoming a capital secretary.

If you should not have sent off "The Bee" before this reaches you, I 'll trouble you to enclose it to me: I 've kept no copy, and am not sure that I remember it exactly.

Have you happened to see the illustrations to an extravaganza of mine (a sort of story which one "makes up as he goes along," to a lot of importunate youngsters) in the May number of "St. Nicholas"?[1] They seem to me, who am but little of a critic however in such matters, to be very charming. Mrs. Dodge appears not to have received the proof-sheets, which I returned from Tampa, in time: for in them I carefully corrected some very disagreeable repetitions, and faults of punctuation, which appear in the publication.

I believe there is a little scrap of a poem of mine in "Scribner's" for May, but I have n't seen it.

I take real delight in thinking of you at Cedarcroft among the leaves. How fares my Master, the Chestnut-tree? If you only had there the infinite sweetness of

[1] "A Fairy Tale for Grown People."

Spring, which is now in full leaf and overflowing song all about us here! I have at command a springy mare, with ankles like a Spanish girl's, upon whose back I go darting through the green overgrown wood-paths like a thrasher about his thicket. The whole air seems full of fecundity: as I ride, I 'm like one of those insects that are fertilized on the wing, — every leaf that I brush against breeds a poem. God help the world when this now-hatching brood of my Ephemeræ shall take flight and darken the air.

After the 3d of May my address will be "Macon, Ga." We will spend a month there. As for further plans, — about which you kindly ask, — they will depend entirely on my state of health at the end of May. I *hope* to be in New York during June: — but you will be informed of my motions.

Tell Mrs. Taylor I wish we could send her a rose from the little garden of the house where we sojourn: though we don't dare to pick one often, by reason that a mocking-bird is sitting on her eggs in the spiræa-bush, and we shrink from disturbing the tranquillity of her mind at this interesting period.

Your friend, S. L.

142 East 18th St., New York, *May* 9, 1877.

My dear Lanier: I return your "Bee" with a sense of discouragement at my inability to find a place for it. I went to "Harper's," meaning to *read* it aloud to Alden, but did n't find him. I thought I could thus make more impression, and get a prompt decision. I read it the other day to Boker, who was here, and he said the —— does n't have more than two as good poems in a year.

I might have been successful, could I have taken more time. But I have been forced to write *six* long art criticisms on the Exhibition, and you've no idea how exhausting such work is. In fact, it is only within two days that I begin to feel a little lifting of the strain upon me, and wake up o' mornings with a sense of being moderately refreshed by sleep. All this work has been inevitable, owing to necessity of meeting some unusual expenses this spring. But I have laid up enough for two months of summer idleness, for which I pant as the hart for the water-brooks — and so can only be thankful.

In your last letters you say very little about your physical condition. I should like to hear that you are getting back strength, and overcoming, no matter how slowly, the persistent trouble. To be sure, your hint of poetic activity is an encouraging sign, and I hope it has its source in more vigorous blood.

As for me, I do nothing but "loaf and invite my soul," when I am not at work. My soul does n't respond to the invitation, as yet. But on the 20th I go to Cornell University to give six lectures to the students, and shall have 10 days idlesse. Perhaps something may come of it.

Now I must close in a hurry, hearing a visitor announced. My wife joins me in the very kindest regards to yours.

Ever faithfully, BAYARD TAYLOR.

MACON, GA., *May* 25, 1877.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: Yours with the "Bee" — my poor little bee, my humblest of humble-bees — came to me here.

Within two weeks from now I hope to see you, and the anticipation gives me a great deal of pleasure. I seem to be fairly on the highroad to health — almost within the boundaries, indeed, of that most lovely state — and am quite agog with all manner of matters about many of which I desire greatly to talk with you. The talk here is of the advance in corn, and of the failure of our City Bank; and, so far as concerns any man I have yet conversed with, there is absolutely nothing in heaven or earth or the waters under the earth but corn and the City Bank. Perhaps, if I had several thousand bushels of the former, or a large deposit in the latter, these topics might interest me more. But I have n't; and when I think how I shall enjoy tackling you about something or other — say Emerson, whom I have been reading all the winter, and who gives me immeasurable delight because he does not propound to me disagreeable systems and hideous creeds but simply walks along high and bright ways where one loves to go with him — then I am ready to praise God for the circumstance that if corn were a dollar a bushel I could not with my present finances buy a lunch for a pony.

I will be here until I start Northward, where you may address me if you should have occasion to write meantime.

My wife would send cordial greetings to you and Mrs. Taylor if she knew I was writing. God bless you.

Your friend, S. L.

142 East 18th St., New York.

My dear Lanier: Just back from giving six lectures at Cornell University, and your letter from Macon awaits

me. It is most welcome, for *at last* you give me a word about your physical state, and a good word it is.

I can't write much, for there is a pile of unanswered letters at my left hand. We shall be here until July 1st; then we go directly to the White Sulphur Springs for a month, and shall divide August between Cedarcroft and a visit to some friends at Newport. I long with inexpressible longing for the release from work; for although somewhat of the work seems to tell — to give me a slight increase of influence in literary circles — it is not what I would choose to do, were I free.

As you say "two weeks from now," I count on seeing you here soon. I shall be very glad to see you taking my thin claret and cheap cigars again, and to talk over your new plans — for I suppose they are *new*. I also need a change in my way of living, and a few possibilities have lately turned up. We all need to live at least 25 years longer, to get our reward. But mine as yet is only half earned; all I care for is *leisure to labor*. My wife joins in most cordial greetings to you. Report yourself here as soon as you arrive, and pardon this hurried scrawl!

Best regards to your father.

Always faithfully, BAYARD TAYLOR.

3315 BARING ST., PHILADELPHIA, PA.,
July 9, 1877.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: I am merely writing a line to enclose the two slips which you will find herein, and which I thought might interest you apropos of what you were telling me the other day. The "Philadelphia Ledger," from which the slip of July 7th is cut, is so reliable in these matters that I suppose there can be no

doubt of the substantial fact as therein stated, though it seems wonderful that the originators of such a movement should not have been immediately struck with the propriety of sending the translator of Goethe to Germany instead of to Russia or to Belgium.

But is n't Russia *or Belgium* a somewhat queer alternation: something like offering a man either the Presidency of the United States *or* the Postmastership of Kennett Square?

I sent you to-day a Boston magazine containing a portrait of me which I think will amuse you,— particularly the smutched one accompanying the biographical sketch inside. This, this is Fame: to have your "visnomy" transformed into that of a keen blue-nosed New England manufacturer of shoe-pegs.

I have not often seen anything more tragic than my wife's indignation over this wood-cut; nor have I succeeded in allaying her resentment by my sympathetic assurance that I think it the unkindest cut of all.

My wife joins me in friendly messages to you both. With earnest wishes that you may be drawing strength from the dear mountains, as it were from the very breasts and big nipples of our Mother Earth,

Faithfully your friend, S. L.

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, VA., *July* 11, 1877.

MY DEAR LANIER: Thanks for your letter and the magazine. In the latter you fare about as well as the rest of us: it is something we must get used to. I wish you could see some of my former villainous faces; they would show you that there is a worse deep than you have yet reached.

As for the mission, I think "Belgium" must be a mis-

take for "Berlin." It would be singular to offer the choice of a *first* or a *fourth* rate place! In any case the German mission is the only one I am able to take; and if it is not offered, I 'll even stay at home. But the matter ought to be decided soon: it disquiets me a little, in spite of my best will not to think about the matter.

This is the most complete nest of repose I have yet found in America. The air, the quiet, the society are just what I need: I drink the water and bathe, and am feeling like a new man. But, oh! how supremely lazy I am! It 's an effort even to write a letter to a friend. I walk half a mile, sit down under a tree, look at the rich colors of the wooded mountains, and am animally happy. I only write poems in dreams, and here 's a line which came to me thus, the other night:

The ship sails true because the seas are wide.

Let me break off here. This indolence (I foresee) will breed fresh activity; but I don't want to think of that now. My wife joins me in cordial greeting to yours. Remember me to Peacock and all other good friends.

Ever faithfully, BAYARD TAYLOR.

We live next door to ex-Governor Walker.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., *July* 28, 1877.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: I send a line to say that we will move, on the day after to-morrow, to Mrs. Caleb Brinton's, about a half mile from Chadd's Ford, where we expect to spend the next two months. We are delighted with the place, which my wife and I have visited and inspected; and we hope that when you return to Cedar-

croft you will bless us with the light of your countenance. My address will be "Chadd's Ford."

I have n't time to write.

My wife unites her cordial salutation with mine to you and all your house.

Faithfully yours, S. L.

KENNETT SQUARE, PA., *August* 11, 1877.

MY DEAR LANIER: Pardon me over and over again for not writing. I have been at home a week from the White Sulphur, and meant to write at once; but family changes are going on — movings, re-arrangements, etc. — which occupied my mind, and made it difficult for me to know when to ask any friend to come. I expect to be at home all the coming week, except Monday and possibly Thursday. Can't you come up? I would go to see you, but have only a little time here, and there are many small affairs which claim my attention. I have been resting *utterly* for six weeks, and am greatly fresher in mind and body. Must be brief to-day, for the inevitable worries find me out and follow me. Write a line to let me know when you can come; the R. R. makes it easy.

Ever faithfully, B. T.

CHADD'S FORD, PA., *August* 26, 1877.

DEAR MR. TAYLOR: Your letter came just as I was starting for New York on a business matter which has occupied me quite closely ever since. I 'm now again at home, however, and hope to be at comparative leisure for a week or so.

I should have been inclined to think you a very shabby Colossus, indeed — to stay away for a week when there were so many Rhodes from here to Kennett — if I had

not gathered from your brief note that you were either very busy or very worried, or both. I do hope you are now more at ease from whatever may have troubled you.

In truth I particularly longed for one whole free day about this lovely house with you. Do you know the place — old Mr. George Brinton's? To the west is a vista running for miles along the Brandywine; it 's so fine that you can fancy, every sunset, that the sun has gone that way on purpose to see the country over there. A long green hill in front of the house slopes down to the river, and within a few feet is a wild ravine through which a stream runs down to the great rock-built milldam.

Tell me how fare our friends Pro- and Epi-metheus, as also Deucalion and Pyrrha, with attendant Spirits and Voices. As for me, all this loveliness of wood, earth, and water makes me feel as if I could do the whole Universe into poetry; but I don't want to write anything large for a year or so, and thus I content myself with throwing off a sort of spray of little songs, whereof the magazines now have several.

Mrs. Lanier joins me in hoping that Mrs. Taylor has brought back some new strength out of the Virginia Mountains.

Faithfully yours, SIDNEY L.

142 EAST 18TH ST., NEW YORK, *September* 6, 1877.

MY DEAR LANIER: I found your letter waiting for me on Monday, when my holiday closed, and we found ourselves back again in our old quarters. I don't think the White Sulphur helped me much, after all, but the sea air and water *did*, and I feel more like my old self now.

I was (for me) exceedingly nervous and restless while at Cedarcroft, and also much occupied with *little* matters and family changes, which made our stay there anything but refreshing. Moreover, I was foolishly expecting, from day to day, that decision of the Government, which has not yet been made, and will probably be delayed another month. I am so accustomed to look forward to some fixed point and work towards it, that I hardly know how to manage an uncertainty which includes two such radically different fates. I will explain the whole matter when we next meet: it is too long a story to write. Since I am at work again, I can more easily banish the subject from my mind. It was really beginning to affect my health — although I am rather ashamed to confess it.

I know Brinton's place very well, and can understand your delight in the scenery. I still maintain that there is no such pastoral beauty anywhere else in the country. You will find C. B. something of an enigma, but I presume he does not spend much time there.

Now tell me what your plans are, when you are coming hitherward again (after the 21st I can give you a bed), and how your physical self prospers. Strange that you should mention my poem just when I take it up again! I have written one new scene since Monday. My wife joins in friendliest greetings to Mrs. Lanier.

Ever faithfully yours, BAYARD TAYLOR.

142 EAST 18TH ST., NEW YORK, *October* 13, 1877.

MY DEAR LANIER: Your letter arrived just as I was leaving for Philadelphia to lecture for a benevolent purpose. I had no time to call personally on Colonel Church (manager of the "Galaxy"), but I wrote a line

and sent it by a messenger, giving him your address and begging him to forward the check at once; therefore, I trust that it is already in your hands, as Church is an amiable, obliging fellow, and I don't think will neglect it.

"Scribner's" are going to publish your poem on the Chestnut-trees, and have it illustrated by me! When I was last at Cedarcroft, I made the necessary sketch of the trees for them.

Now I have a piece of news for you. My "Deukalion" is finished! The conception overcame me like a summer cloud, during all my holiday time; but the difficulty wherein I stuck fast more than a year ago, *would not* be solved. But little by little, I worked out the only possible solution for me. I finished the 3rd Act, my great stumbling-block; then, as the 4th and last Act was already clear in my mind, and I still felt fresh for the task, I went on. Now all is complete and fairly copied into that volume which you will remember. But I shall hardly publish before another year. It is an immense relief, as the delight of writing was counterbalanced by the huge difficulties of the subject. Well, there 's more of my life and thought and aspiration in this poem than in all else I have written, and if it has no vitality, nothing of mine can have.

For a week past I have been giving all my spare time to a translation and adaptation to our stage of Schiller's "Don Carlos" for Lawrence Barrett. It 's a new sort of work for me, very interesting, and just what I need to let myself down easily from the heights of "Deukalion."

You don't tell me what you are doing — or going to do — in Baltimore. It 's too bad that the Government is so slow and muddled in the matter of making appointments. I also have been kept hanging in suspense for

over three months, and now find that my chances are rapidly sliding down to nothing. I 've given up all expectation of the place which would help me on in my literary plans, and I won't have any other.

I begin my course of 12 lectures in Boston on Wednesday next. Work, work, work! — But I thank the Lord that my poem is finished.

Always faithfully yours, BAYARD TAYLOR.

BALTIMORE, MD., *October* 8, 1877.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: I have been in the unsettled state of a bear who goes poking about the logs and coverts in search of a place to hibernate; and this nomadic condition has kept me from answering your letter. I had thought of being in Washington during the winter. There was some prospect that either a small consulate or some minor place in one of the Departments would be given me. But, from what I can gather, places of this sort are rarely obtained except by *personal* application and persistence. Of course I cannot come down to that, and so have let the matter go. If anything should be offered I will cheerfully take it, but I will do no urging or solicitation of any sort.

I have engaged quarters here for the winter, and will bring my family over, in about a week, from Chadd's Ford.

The editors of the "Galaxy" write me that a poem of mine called "A Dream of the Age: To Richard Wagner," will appear in the November number. As it is about time for that to be in print, and as they are sometimes slow in remitting when I write, will you take the trouble to call at Sheldon's (I think it is 8 Murray St.) and get the check and send it to me? The

poem is about seventy-five or eighty lines, if I am not mistaken. I would n't bother you with this, but I really need the money. My address is "Care of Mrs. S. B. Bird, 40 Mt. Vernon Place, Baltimore, Md."

My "Bee" is in the October "Lippincott's." Tell me what you are doing with Deucalion. Have you seen a poem by Swinburne of which the refrain is: "Villon, our sad mad bad glad brother's name"? "Sad mad bad glad" is not intended for a joke. It 's a wild panegyric of Villon.

Will you squelch the Atlantic contributor who is unhappy about Goethe?

With cordial messages to Mrs. Taylor,

Your friend, SIDNEY L.

33 DENMEAD ST., BALTIMORE, MD., *January* 6, 1878.

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR: When I tell you that since I saw you I have searched the city of Baltimore for a dwelling suitable to my little flock, have found one, have cajoled the landlord into a hundred repairs and betterments, have painted, whitewashed, weather-stripped and new-locked-and-bolted the entire establishment, have furnished it with all manner of odds and ends purchased from all manner of cheap Johns, have got in my coal and my wood, have provided a lot of oatmeal and hominy against the Wolf, have hired a Cook and General Domestic, have arranged with the daily milkman and all his peripatetic tribe, have done at least a million and sixteen other things, and have finally moved in and settled, — you will understand why both Christmas and New Year passed without greetings from me to you. Though it has been a desperate piece of work, it seems a mere bagatelle when looked back upon from the serene

delight with which we all find ourselves at last in something like a Home. I think I could wander about the house — we have nine rooms! — for a month with my hands in my pockets, in supreme content with treading upon my own carpets and gazing at my own furniture. When I am on the street there is a certain burgher-like heaviness in my tread; why should I skip along like a bladdery Bohemian? I am a man of substance; I am liable, look you, for water rates, gas bills, and other important disbursements incident to the possession of two gowns and everything handsome about me.

Let me have some news of yourself — "yourself" being a term which of course includes Mrs. Taylor and the poem.

I send you part of a Christmas poem[1] which I wrote specially for the purpose of giving an engraver a good chance for four fine wood-cuts. Don't you think a sheep-painter could make four lovely pictures by carrying into detail the mere hints given in the poem?

I will probably be in New York before long, and greatly hope to see you. Our new address here is — and God grant long may be, for we are *so* tired of moving on! — 33 Denmead St. May you write it till your pen, like the medium's, can figure it out alone.

Accept my loving wish for the New Year: that it may be full of new creations from your hand, for this, to the artist, is supreme happiness.

Your friend, SIDNEY L.

142 EAST 18TH ST., NEW YORK, *January* 20, 1878.

MY DEAR LANIER: I was wondering what had become of you when your letter arrived. It was pleasant to find you so active and well-contented in your new

[1] "The Hard Times in Elfland."

home, and I relished your delight in it, having had exactly the same sensation here, three years ago, after living so long in trunks and satchels.

The Baltimore papers have no literary criticism — not a particle. Can't you persuade the best of them to try the experiment with you? There 's such a *stay* in having regular work of some kind. I think your New Year poem charmingly quaint and fanciful; and so do several persons to whom I have shown it. I wanted to get it into the "Weekly Tribune," and the Editor only declined because New Year was 10 days past, and there was a stock of poetry impatiently waiting.

I have finished (but not yet revised) Schiller's "Don Carlos" since I saw you, and have done a good deal of magazine work. My only poem is the "Ode on Victor Emmanuel," which you may have seen. The Italians here are wild with delight, and the Consul has forwarded a copy to Queen Margherita. For the last few days I have been writing as little as possible, in order to rest, having been troubled with a sense of great oppression on the chest. The fact is, I must take more rest than I have been doing.

Speaking of this, the prospect of a good rest abroad is still held out to me; but after such long uncertainty, I dare not count upon it in the least. I learn that the President favors my appointment, and Evarts says nothing against it: still they don't make it! And the post has been vacant nearly six months. I think a decision of some kind will be made in a few weeks. During the fall, when I gave up all expectation of going, I was happy; and I would withdraw my name now, rather than be so unsettled, but for the great chance of the Goethe work.

My wife has been laid up with a catarrh, and Lilian is at Vassar; but friends come in now and then, and keep us cheerful. I can feel that I am steadily gaining in various ways, and am hopeful of the future.

Keep up *your* spirits, also; — but I think you have the blessing of a good natural stock of them.

Ever faithfully yours,

BAYARD TAYLOR.

33 DENMEAD ST., BALTIMORE, MD.,
February 3, 1878.

MY DEAR FRIEND: I was sorry to miss you and Mrs. Taylor when I called on Monday. My cold had taken such possession of me on Sunday evening that I found it prudent to keep my room. I delivered your books to the servant. I read through the three volumes on Sunday: and upon a sober comparison I think Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" worth at least a million of "Among My Books" and "Atlanta in Calydon." In the two latter I could not find anything which has not been much better said before; but "Leaves of Grass" was a real refreshment to me — like rude salt spray in your face — in spite of its enormous fundamental error that a thing is good because it is natural, and in spite of the world-wide difference between my own conceptions of art and its author's.

I did not find a fitting moment to mention to you a matter in which I am much interested. I have an unconquerable longing to stop all work for a few months except the study of Botany, French and German, and the completion of a long poem which I have been meditating. In order to do this I hoped it might be possible to utilize a tract of timber land containing about a

thousand acres which I own in Georgia. I have somewhere heard that there was an association, or institution of some sort, in New York, for helping literary people; and it occurred to me that such a corporation might take my lands in pledge for a loan of five or six hundred dollars. I should want it for twelve months. The lands lie immediately on a railroad which runs to Savannah, and whose main business is the transportation of lumber and timber to that port. They are in a portion of the state which is now attracting much attention from the North Carolina turpentine-distillers and lumbermen, and which has recently developed great capacities for sheep-raising. They are also valuable for agricultural purposes, after all the timber is cut off.

Tell me if any such institution exists. I asked Mr. Bryant about it while in New York; he did not know of it at all. He added that if he were now as prosperous as he was five or six years ago he would have offered to advance the money himself on the lands: which was a very kindly thought.

Don't give yourself the least concern about this. Of course it is n't at all probable that any such association exists if Mr. Bryant does not know of it; and I don't suppose I would mention it to you at all except for the anxiety with which I long to draw my breath after a hard fight, and to get the ends of my thoughts together —as Carlyle says.

I hope Mrs. Taylor is quite recovered from her cold. As for you — you range over such an enormous compass both of literary and terrestrial ground that I would not be at all surprised to hear at any moment that you were off for

The long wash of Australasian seas,

in order to deliver a lecture at Sydney upon Limoges Enamel, thence to Capetown for the purpose of reading a dissertation on the Elohistic Division of the Book of Genesis, thence home by way of Reikiavik (I deny any obligation to spell this dreadful word correctly), where you were to recite an original poem (in Icelandic) on the Relation of Balder to Pegasus.

Your friend, SIDNEY L.

33 DENMEAD ST., BALTIMORE, MD.,
February 11, 1878.

MY DEAR FRIEND: It is long since I have had a keener pleasure than the announcement of your nomination[1] brings me. I have just read it; and without having time for more than a word I devote that to the practical question, — can I be of any service in the matter of the confirmation by the Senate? Will there be any opposition at all, there? The Senator from Alabama is a dear friend of mine and I can ask *any*thing of him: besides, the Senators from Georgia and one from Mississippi — Mr. Lamar — are all gentlemen with whom my relations are very friendly. If there is the least likelihood of necessity for arraying your friends, please let me know so that I may have the pleasure of telling these senators what I know about you.

God speed your final appointment. Is n't it simply too delightful? I could kiss Mr. Hayes, in behalf of the Fitness of Things — which was never more graciously worshipped than by this same nomination.

My wife joins me in hearty congratulations to you both.

Your friend, SIDNEY L.

[1] As minister to Germany.

142 East 18th St., New York, *February* 19, 1878.

My dear Lanier: There 's a rewarding as well as an avenging fate! What a payment for all my years of patient and unrecognized labor! But you know just what the appointment is to me. It came as a surprise after all, — and a greater amazement is the wonderful and generous response to it from press and people. I feel as if buried under a huge warm wave of congratulation.

I heard, indirectly, yesterday, that the Southern Senators are delighted, and will not fail to vote for confirmation. Still, if you could say a word to Lamar, it might be a further assurance; as a Southern man, your endorsement would certainly strengthen me. But pray don't go to any special trouble, for Bryant and Reid think the confirmation certain. I can only write a word to-day, for there is no end to the kindly telegrams and letters, and I wish to answer them all. My wife and I send love and thanks to both of you.

Bayard Taylor.

33 Denmead St., Baltimore, *March* 4, 1878.

My dear Friend: The enclosed letter from Mr. Lamar came this morning. Its expressions are so cordial towards you that I thought you might care to see it.

With new delight each day I regard the prospect before you. I shall begin to love Mr. Hayes! A man who appoints you Minister to Germany and who vetoes the Silver Bill . . . is a man who goes near to redeem the time.

But I cannot now do more than send you a violet. I 'm making some desperate efforts to get steady work, of any kind; for I find I cannot at all maintain our supplies of daily bread by poetry alone. So far I have

failed in getting any constant work, but I keep trying for it, and I do not doubt it will come.

My wife sends hearty messages to you and Mrs. Taylor. As for me, you know how I am always your grateful and affectionate S. L.

33 Denmead St., Baltimore, Md.,
March 25, 1878.

My dear Mr. Taylor: Some time when you 're riding in a street car and have n't anything important to think about, or rather *don't want* to think of anything important — won't you be kind enough to read this sonnet[1] (if you can) and find out if it is quite too absurd? Of course it is merely meant to please a friend here, — a woman who plays Beethoven with the large conception of a man, and yet nurses her children all day with a noble simplicity of devotion such as I have rarely seen: being withal, in point of pure technic, the greatest piano-player I ever heard.

I have been studying German in the wee minutes allowed by other occupations, without a teacher; and don't want you to think I would with malice prepense try to write a poem in that tongue.

I mark a thousand pleasant things about you in the newspapers, and rejoice heartily in them all. God speed you in your whole work.

Your friend, Sidney L.

There is here a gap of over six months, Mr. Taylor having left the United States to enter upon his duties as Minister to Germany. In the last letter of the series Mr. Lanier writes: —

[1] To Annette Falk-Auerbach.

180 St. Paul St., Baltimore, Md.,
October 20, 1878.

My dearest Minister, — always a minister of grace to me, — I have long forborne to write you because I knew your whole mind would be occupied with a thousand new cares, and I could not bear to add the burden of a letter thereto. But you must be getting easy in the new saddle by this; and somehow I feel that I can't wait longer before sending you a little love-letter that shall at least carry my longing over the big seas to you. Not long ago I was in New York for some days; but you were in Germany; — and the city seemed depopulated. There were multitudes of what Walt Whitman calls

> Little plentiful manikins
> Skipping about in collars and tailed coats,

but my Man, my *haeleða leofost* (as it is in Beówulf) was wanting, and I wandered disconsolately towards 142 E. 18th St. — where I used so often and so ruthlessly to break in upon your labors — as if I could *wish* you back into your chair rolling out the prophecy of Deucalion. Even the Westminster Hotel had new proprietors and I felt a sense of intentional irony in its having changed from the European to the American plan, — as if for pure spite because you had left America and gone to Europe. My dear, when *are* you coming back?

A short time ago I found in a second-hand bookstall a copy of Sir Henry Wotton's works and letters printed in 1685, and bought it — with about all the money I had: for a joke of old Sir Henry's on a minister carried my mind to you. Having been asked (he narrates the story himself, being then on a ministerial journey through Germany) to write in an album, he chose to define *a*

Minister, and said: *A Minister is a man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country.*

I have seen your "Deucalion" announced, but nothing more. Indeed I have been so buried in study for the past six months that I know not news nor gossip of any kind. Such days and nights of glory as I have had! I have been studying Early English, Middle English and Elizabethan poetry, from Beówulf to Ben Jonson: and the world seems twice as large. I enclose a programme of lectures I am going to give before a class of subscribers at the Peabody Institute this winter, from which you will see the drift of my work.

You will also care to know that Scribner's has accepted three papers of mine on "The Physics of Poetry," in which I have succeeded in developing a complete system of prosody for all languages from the physical constitution of sound. It has given me indescribable pleasure to be able, through the principles therein announced, to put formal poetry on a scientific basis which renders all its processes perfectly secure.

If you should see an Appleton's Journal for the current month — November — you may be interested in an experiment of mine therein with logoœdic dactyls called "The Revenge of Hamish." Another freer treatment of the same rhythm by me will appear in a book to be issued by Roberts Brothers in the "No Name Series" (called the "Masque of Poets") under the heading "The Marshes of Glynn:" — though all this last is as yet a secret and not to be spoken of till the book shall have been out and been cast to the critics for a while. I hope to find a publisher for my book on English Prosody[1] next spring; also for my historical and criti-

[1] The Science of English Verse.

[First and last pages, in facsimile, of a letter to Bayard Taylor]

180 St. Paul St.
Baltimore, Md.
Oct. 20th 1878.

My dearest Minister — always a minister of grace to me —; I have long [illegible] to write you because I knew your whole mind would be occupied with a thousand new cares and I could not bear to add the burden of a letter thereto. But you must be getting easy in the new saddle by this: and somehow I feel that I can't wait longer before sending you a little love-letter that shall at least carry my longing over the big seas to you. Not long ago

classes in those cities.

There! I have reported progress, up to date. Who better than you — who looked so kindly upon my poor little beginning — has the right to know how poor I'm going?

Give me some little account of yourself, if you are not too busy. My wife and I send grateful and affectionate messages to you: adding cordial postscripts for Mrs. Taylor and Miss Lilian.

God help you and keep you ~~ever~~ always in such fair ways as follow the fair wishes of your faithful

Sidney Lanier

cal account, in two volumes, of "The English Sonnet-Makers from Surrey to Shakspere;" and I am in treaty with Scribner's Sons for a "Boy's Froissart" which I have proposed to them and which they like the idea of so far. By next autumn I trust I will have a volume of poetry ("The Songs of Aldhelm") in print, which is now in a pigeon-hole of my desk half-jotted down. During the coming week I go to Washington and Philadelphia to arrange, if possible, for delivering my course of lectures before classes in those cities.

There! I have reported progress up to date. Who better than you — who looked so kindly upon my poor little beginning — has the right to know how far I've gone?

Give me some little account of yourself, if you are not too busy. My wife and I send grateful and affectionate messages to you: adding cordial postscripts for Mrs. Taylor and Miss Lilian.

God bless you and keep you ever in such fair ways as follow the fair wishes of

Your faithful SIDNEY L.

Mr. Taylor died at Berlin in December of this year — a few weeks after the above letter reached him.

A Poet's Letters to a Friend

A Poet's Letters to a Friend

Paul Hamilton Hayne[1]

Long before the public knew anything of Sidney Lanier as an author, it was my good fortune to have formed his acquaintance, not personally, but by correspondence. In the year 1867, if memory serves me, a poem by him in one of the Southern periodicals attracted my notice. It was a brief lyric, distinguished by a peculiar and scarcely definable quality of fancy, which affected the reader much as a loving observer of nature might be affected by the strange, golden remoteness of an October horizon. I wrote to the young poet, who was more than a decade my junior, some words of appreciation touching these verses; and he replied in a manner so cordial that thenceforth a correspondence was established between us, which, though with many interruptions, continued down to a period closely preceding his death.

From the beginning I could not but place a high value upon his letters. Their quaintness of thought and phraseology seemed at first to indicate affectation, — an affectation of archaism; but soon I learned to underderstand that this style was as natural to Lanier as

[1] When Mr. Hayne printed some of these letters in the "Critic" in 1886, his delicacy of feeling led him to omit all those portions in which Mr. Lanier expressed admiration for Mr. Hayne's work. It seems fitting that these should now be restored, and the letters are accordingly printed here in their entirety.

breathing. He had steeped his imagination from boyhood in the writings of the earlier English annalists and poets, — Geoffrey of Monmouth, Sir Thomas Mallory, Gower, Chaucer, and the whole bead-roll of such ancient English worthies. I was of course a little surprised during our earlier epistolary communion to perceive, not only his unusually thorough knowledge of Chaucer, for example, whose couplets flowed as "trippingly from his pen" as if "The Canterbury Tales" and "The Romaunt of the Rose" were his daily mental food, but to find him quoting as naturally and easily from "Piers Ploughman," and scores of the half-obsolete ballads of the English and Scottish borders.

He gloried in antiquarian lore and antiquarian literature. Hardly "Old Monkbarns" himself could have pored over a black-letter volume with greater enthusiasm. Especially he loved the tales of chivalry, and thus, when the opportunity came, was fully equipped as an interpreter of Froissart and "King Arthur" for the benefit of our younger generation of students. With the great Elizabethans Lanier was equally familiar. Instead of skimming Shakspeare, he went down into his depths. Few have written so subtly of Shakspeare's mysterious sonnets. Through all Lanier's productions we trace the influence of his early literary loves; but nowhere do the pithy quaintnesses of the old bards and chroniclers display themselves more effectively — not only in the illustrations, but through the innermost warp and woof of the texture of his ideas and his style — than in some of his familiar epistles.

Among the letters now produced, there is one of particular significance. It is the letter in which he speaks of his greatest inspirer, of the chief mistress of his

artistic reverence and affection, — music. Poetry he distinctly affirms to have been with him a species of "side-issue." The effect of his musical genius — a genius *pur et simple*, undeveloped as unmarred by formal education — upon the spirit and *technique* of his verse was very remarkable, being sometimes, as in "The Marshes of Glynn," "beautiful exceedingly," and again, as in the "Centennial Cantata," merely grotesque.

His letters to me in 1868, which showed in a delightful way the nature of his literary tastes and studies, and which were full of felicitous references, and illustrations from sources "caviare to the general," have unhappily been lost; but the following from Macon, Ga., dated March 15, '69, is noteworthy in several particulars: firstly, as giving glimpses of the man's *morale* and his subtle spiritual instincts; and secondly, of that deep, over-refining intellectuality, with its searching introspections, German rather than English, which emphasizes so much that he has composed, whether in prose or verse. A few words of explanation concerning this letter. He had been discussing, in previous communications, the great proneness of men of sensitive temperament and eager, buoyant, imaginative aspirations toward the reaction of despondency and its accompanying temptations; and Lanier had acknowledged that he was himself subject occasionally to the dominion of a gloomy fiend, a recent visit from whom he had most graphically described.

MACON, GA., *March* 15, 1869.

MY DEAR MR. HAYNE: Your forbearing goodness entirely bankrupts me: but my outstanding obligations to you lie upon me so sweetly and so unlike all other

debts, that I do not desire to take the benefit of the Act relieving Insolvents, and I refuse to be discharged. Of course I would not have dared to write to any ordinary correspondent what I wrote you: for I should very surely have been told that I was a lackadaisical fool who needed work and physic. These wonderful hells into which we descend, at such times — who will picture them to one who has not dwelt in them? It is idle to discuss colors with a blind man. As for me, however, the good God has seen fit to arm me, very singularly, against the dark hosts of temptations that dwell in these places. The longing for stimulants, which I feel in common, I suppose, with all men of like nature, always defeats itself in my particular case, by awakening a certain *Pride of Pain*, a certain *self-gratulation of Sorrow*, (how foolish this sounds!) which enables me to defy the whole damnable troop with a power which seems thoroughly anomalous, in view of the fact that, ordinarily, I do not think my *will* is very strong, because my *sympathies*, which *are* strong, easily override it. Indeed, it is not a bad thing, that I get plunged into these awful depths: for, O My Friend, they teach me lessons which are beyond the reach of reason, beyond the utmost of Thought, beyond Time, beyond my*self*. Have you ever felt, in those good moments when the formulæ of life sink out of memory and the soul comes to look at things with a sort of Before-World simplicity, — have you felt, at such times, that you had *two selves*, of which one stood as it were in the continual background, calm, sedate as eternity, looking with a half-amused smile upon the slips and errors and crimes and contortions and struggles of your *other* self in its feverish life, as if this calm inner self were confident that, after

all the struggles and fevers, the *struggling* and *feverish self* will come out pure and whole and calm and strong? What do we mean when we say one is "*master* of *himself*," — "one is conscious of himself," — "one examines himself," — etc.?

In these, and a thousand similar expressions of common life, are indicated some wonderful metaphysic facts (I hate the word *psychology*), which, when the metaphysicians come to find the true source of their science, will be quickly revealed.

At any rate, these present Spring-breezes are blowing on my soul as on a young green leaf, and I wave and sway and rise and fall, in the midst of the Heavens, with a wonderful love and happiness upbearing me. Ah, the exquisite, intense calms, which are yet full of a strange quickening and stir of birth! I have a boy, whose eyes are blue as your Aethra's. Every day when my work is done I take him in my strong arms and lift him up and pore in his face. The intense repose, penetrated somehow with a thrilling mystery of *potential* activity, which dwells in his large open eyes, teaches me new things. I say to myself, where are the strong arms in which I, too, might lay me, and repose, and yet be full of the fire of life? And always, through the twilight, come answers from the other world: Master, Master, Master; there is one, one Christ: in His Arms we rest.

Truly your friend,

SIDNEY LANIER.

Not infrequently Lanier would send me copies of his unpublished verses, and some of his best poems I thus enjoyed the opportunity of perusing in MS. "Corn," I remember, was among the number; and I vividly

recall the impression which that fine lyric made upon me. "In 'Corn' I *have* aimed at popularity," he wrote; "I mean the *higher* popularity given to artistic work." The "little poem" which he mentions in the following note (Macon, March 21, 1870) was a fragment, though complete in itself, taken from his "Jacquerie," a production which he never, I believe, completed.

MACON, GA., *March* 21, 1870.

MY DEAR MR. HAYNE: I thank you very heartily for your encouraging communications of my little poem; and for your thoughtful kindness in sending me the duplicate copies contained in two of your letters.

Much reflection convinces me that *praise* is no ignoble stimulus, and that the artist should not despise it. Once satisfied that the praise is genuine praise for genuine art, — surely, then, the artist may with confident delight bathe in these glorious seas of sympathetic appreciation, and invigorate himself for work. "Good Heavens!" cries Mrs. Browning *ex ore* Aurora Leigh: "I shall be almost popular!" In this exclamation, one discovers at once a true and a false philosophy. It is true, Martin Farquhar Tupper is, in a certain sense, "popular": but then how about Homer and Milton and Shakespeare? Are they not popular, also?

And so, whenever my one condition-requisite, above assigned, is fulfilled: that is, whenever I am satisfied that the praiser, being himself an artist, praises what he considers good work; I appropriate this praise with entire abandon, I enjoy it without *arrières pensées* as to whether it is my right, or as to whether I am infringing upon that outwardly-fascinating, inwardly-false German doctrine that the Self of genius is sufficient for itself.

I will write you again, in a day or two: meantime, for the enjoyment of your sympathy, which I received without question and use without hesitation, accept the sincere gratitude of Your Friend,

SIDNEY LANIER.

The next letter seems to me a striking one. One part of it is a prose-poem, touched by an exquisite delicacy of fancy; and another part foreshadows that trenchant critical force, combining fine analysis with truly philosophical generalization, displayed so conspicuously, at a subsequent period, in Lanier's lectures at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

MACON, GA., *April* 13, 1870.

MY DEAR MR. HAYNE: Watching, night and day, for two weeks past, by the bedside of a sick friend, I have had no spiritual energy to escape out of certain gloomy ideas which always possess me when I am in the immediate presence of physical ailment; and I did not care to write you that sort of letter which one is apt to send under such circumstances, since I gather from your letters that you have enough and to spare of these dismal down-weighings of the flesh's ponderous cancer upon suffering and thoughtful souls.

I am glad, therefore, that I waited until this divine day. If the year were an Orchestra, to-day would be the Flute-tone in it. A serene Hope, just on the very verge of realizing itself: a tender loneliness, — what some German calls *Waldeinsamkeit*, wood-loneliness, — the ineffable withdrawal-feeling that comes over one when he hides himself in among the trees, and knows himself shut in by their purity, as by a fragile yet

impregnable wall, from the suspicions and the trade-regulations of men; and an inward thrill, in the air, or in the sunshine, one knows not which, half like the thrill of the passion of love, and half like the thrill of the passion of friendship: — these, which make up the office of the flute-voice in those poems which the old masters wrote for the Orchestra, also prevail throughout to-day.

Do you like — as I do — on such a day to go out into the sunlight and *stop thinking*, — lie fallow, like a field, and absorb those certain liberal *potentialities* which will in after days reappear, duly formulated, duly grown, duly perfected, as poems? I have a curiosity to know if to you, as to me, there come such as this day: — a day exquisitely satisfying with all the fulnesses of the Spring, and filling you as full of nameless tremors as a girl on a wedding-morn; and yet, withal, a day which utterly denies you the gift of speech, which puts its finger on the lip of your inspiration, which inexorably enforces upon your soul a silence that you infinitely long to break, a day, in short, which takes absolute possession of you and says to you, in tones which command obedience, *to-day you must forego expression and all outcome, you must remain a fallow field, for the sun and wind to fertilize, nor shall any corn or flowers sprout into visible green and red until to-morrow*, — mandates, further, that you have learned after a little experience not only not to fight against, but to love and revere as the wise communication of the Unseen Powers.

Have you seen Browning's "The Ring and the Book"? I am confident that, at the birth of this man, among all the good fairies who showered him with magnificent endowments, one bad one — as in the old

tale — crept in by stealth and gave him a constitutional twist i' the neck, whereby his windpipe became, and has ever since remained, a marvellous tortuous passage. Out of this glottis-labyrinth his words won't, and can't come straight. A hitch and a sharp crook in every sentence bring you up with a shock. But what a shock it is? Did you ever see a picture of a lasso, in the act of being flung? In a thousand coils and turns, inextricably crooked and involved and whirled, yet, if you mark the noose at the end, you see that it is directly in front of the bison's head, there, and is bound to catch him! That is the way Robert Browning catches you. The first sixty or seventy pages of "The Ring and the Book" are altogether the most doleful reading, in point either of idea or of music, in the English language; and yet the monologue of Giuseppe Caponsacchi, that of Pompilia Comparini, and the two of Guido Franceschini, are unapproachable, in their kind, by any living or dead poet, *me judice*. Here Browning's jerkiness comes in with inevitable effect. You get lightning-glimpses — and, as one naturally expects from lightning, zig-zag glimpses — into the intense night of the passion of these souls. It is entirely wonderful and without precedent. The fitful play of Guido's lust, and scorn, and hate, and cowardice, closes with a master-stroke:

> ". . . Christ! Maria! God! . . .
> *Pompilia, will you let them murder me?*"

Pompilia, mark you, is dead, by Guido's own hand; deliberately stabbed, because he hated her purity, which all along he has reviled and mocked with the Devil's own malignant ingenuity of sarcasm.

You spoke of a project you wished to tell me. Let

me hear it. Your plans are always of interest to me. Can I help you? I 've not put pen to paper, in the literary way, in a long time. How I thirst to do so, how I long to sing a thousand various songs that oppress me, unsung, — is inexpressible. Yet, the mere work that brings bread gives me no time. I know not, after all, if this is a sorrowful thing. Nobody likes my poems except two or three friends, — who are themselves poets, and can supply themselves!

Strictly upon Scriptural principle, I 've written you (as you see) almost entirely about myself. This is doing unto you as I would you should do unto me. Go, and do likewise. Write me about yourself.

Your Friend,

SIDNEY LANIER.

FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL, NEW YORK,
August 9, 1870.

MY DEAR MR. HAYNE: Your letter, containing the poem, reached me at Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, where I had been spending some weeks. I received it at night, about midnight. Some friends — one of whom was Mr. Jefferson Davis — were sitting in the porch of my cottage, and I could not resist the temptation to read the poem aloud to them. So, — while my fair wife held the candle and shaded it with rounded white hand from the mountain-breeze, I read; and I feel very confident you would have been gratified with the sentiments of approval which followed, in hearty sympathy with the piece. I like it better than anything you have written: it has in it the *magnetism* which distinguishes genuine poetry from culture-poetry.

Write me some more like this, good Friend!

I am travelling for my health. If you know what this

phrase means, you know to what a melancholy state I am come. It would seem that the foul fiend, Consumption, hath me on the hip. Against him I still fight: but God knows the event thereof. I had started for Minnesota: but I find the journey so disagreeable that, after resting here a day or two, I 'm going back to Orange C. H., Va., where I have a friend living among the Sweet Mountains, with whom I shall stay some weeks; and where, an thou hast any bowels of compassion left in thy soul's abdomen, thou wilt write me, "Care Charles Taliaferro, Esq."

I do no work at all. I am too ill. This is Apollyon's unkindest cut of all. In this, he hath wounded my sword-arm. Well, well. And so, write me, dear Mr. Hayne, and believe that I always enjoy heartily your cheering words, and that I am always your Friend,

SIDNEY LANIER.

MACON, GA., *March* 20, 1871.

MY DEAR MR. HAYNE: Your letter came during my absence from Macon, else I should sooner have told you the pleasure which I have derived from your MS. "Fire Pictures."

I have picked out a grain or two of gravel, as it were, and slag, which I find scattered thro' your Fire-Product; and I mention them, simply *because* they are small and might therefore escape your attention: — which being first done, I can then tell you about the pure fire and the rare flame-beauty which delight me in your Poem.

1st. In the second stanza-picture, two of the verbs have the ancient termination . . .*'eth*, viz., "turneth," and "burneth;" while, in the same stanza, the first verb

has the modern termination *'s*, viz., "sweeps." Would n't the critics require all to be homogeneous, either modern form, or ancient form?

2d. In the 4th picture, the word "lava's" is intended for the plural *lavas*, and not for the possessive case, *nicht wahr?*

3d. In the same stanza, would you not desire to make some change in the "*mothers*' frenzied *hand;*" "mothers'" being the possessive *plural*, and "hand" being singular?

4th. In the same stanza, do you not think the *last two lines* would be better in the earlier portion of the poem, before you have passed from the *general*, to the *detailed* description of the pictures? Do you not think that a *general* idea (as contained in

> "What strange visions form and start
> Out from its mysterious heart")

makes rather a fall, than otherwise, from the *climax* of a picture whose details, so nobly done, justly sum themselves up in the words,

> "But how near
> Seem the anguish and the fear"?

That is, does not the generalness of "what strange visions, etc." blunt the dramatic point which comes to a keen and fine climax with

> "But how near
> Seem" *this* "anguish and" *this* "fear,"

which you have just been so beautifully describing? The principle on which I would exclude the two last lines of the stanza, and let it end with "seem the anguish and the fear" — is the same with that which explains the well-known fact that, to see *one man* with

blood flowing from a wound is a more powerful excitement of ordinary sympathy than to read in general terms of a thousand men killed and wounded. In the *beginning* of a picture the excluded lines would be unobjectionable: but I am confident they injure the climax in the *end* of one.

5th. In the 7th stanza, the line "Here 's a glowing warm interior" hath no fellow in the matter of rhyme, but is a widow'd and all mateless line. So, also, the line "With those hues, rich-toned but homely" in the same strophe.

6th. Is there any authority for the form "Salvatoré" — of Salvator Rosa's name? I merely mean to call your attention to it; and have no means immediately at hand to satisfy my doubt as to whether that is a permissible method: indeed it is quite possible that my question is ridiculous, but, — *stet.*

7th. In the 8th strophe, "gleams," in the last line, should be *gleam*, agreeing with "hill-side and meadow."

8th. In the 11th strophe, would not the line "*And* the heavy grief-moulds pressed" reveal its grammatical dependence and connection better by substituting WITH for "*and*": — or by some such construction?

9th. And lastly, and generally, would not the refrain "Oh the Fire" be better *without* the brackets in which it is inclosed? — And now, when I commence to tell you about the charm which your Poem has for me, I am greatly at a loss where to begin, and *wholly* at a loss where to end.

> "Backward o'er its river-courses,
> Backward to its mountain-sources,
> While the blood-red sunset burneth
> Like a God's face grand with ire,"

is too beautiful, and one can say nothing about it better than to quote it. To this, the "Oh thou wan faint-hearted fire" in the next strophe forms an exquisite set-off.

I have already spoken of the Vesuvian picture. With what a poet's instinct you have seized upon those accessions of the Volcano (*i. e.*, the temples, the statues, the town, the hill-top, the mother, the children, the strand) which would make the picture necessarily *beautiful* at the same time that it is *tragical!*

> "Ere the flame-devouring magic
> Coils about their golden splendor,
> And the tender
> Glory of the mellowing fields
> To the wild Destroyer yields"

is an exquisite stroke of melody, and tingles in my ears a long time.

In the martyr-picture, I am specially struck with the marvellous marriage of sound and word in the last two lines:

> "And o'er those reverend hairs, silvered and hoary,
> Settles the semblance of a crown of glory."

This is *long* and *serene:* — as a blissful eternity should be!

Your Flemish interior is simply perfect. It creates within one a parlous longing for a tankard and pipe; — and, what ho, drawer, let them both be of some capacity!

And next comes the (*me judice*) glory and fair climax of the poem, the sweetest notes, to my mind, and the fullest of genuine poets'-music, that you have ever sung. I mean

"... Fairly flowing
Like a rivulet rippling deep
Thro' the meadow-lands of Sleep,
Bordered where its music swells
By the languid Lotos-bells
And the twilight Asphodels,"

(and if flower-bells were church-bells they would chime just so!)

"Mingled with a richer boon
Of queen-lilies, each a moon
Orbed into white completeness: —
O the perfume and the sweetness
Of those grouped and fairy flowers,
Over which the love-lorn Hours
Linger, — not alone for them,
Tho' the Lotos swings its stem
With a lulling stir of leaves,
Tho' the lady-Lily laves
Coy feet in the crystal waves,
And a silvery under-tune
From some mystic wind-song grieves,
Dainty-sweet, amid the bells
Of the twilight Asphodels —
But because a charm more rare
Glorifies the mellow air
In the gleam of lifted eyes,
In the tranquil ecstasies
Of two lovers, leaf-embowered
Lounging there,
Each of whose fair lives hath flowered
Like the lily petals finely,
Like the Asphodels divinely?"

I am quite in friendly earnest, — and you know I *love* music! — when I tell you, dear Mr. Hayne, that I do not know of anything, of the same style, in our language which is so beautiful as this passage. The flow of the

melody is unbrokenly perfect; and the interfusing of the exquisite nature-picture with the one-passion of the two *human* hearts makes an *inner* music dwelling in the *material* music which enchants one beyond measure. Nothing you have ever done has pleased me so entirely: and I believe the verdict of after-poets will support me.

My letter is so long that I will not go into any more details than to notice with what exquisite art you have made your poem, at the close, flicker into silence as the fire flickers into darkness. And I would leave you to know that if it were *I*, I would not for all the world disturb one line of those last ones about which you have drawn brackets and noted "to be altered!" Do not alter one jot or tittle of those concluding lines: you could not improve them, nor any man. Do not put a sacrilegious pen-stroke through a single word of that strophe No. 11. You can't paint a rose: no more can you paint a dead leaf: one is perfect, so is t' other: — let your dead leaf alone.

I return your MS., having numbered it, so that you can understand my references: — but won't you be kind enough to send it back to me, *to keep?* I would like it hugely, as a remembrance of you.

I 'm always Your Friend,

SIDNEY LANIER.

MARIETTA, GA., *September* 13, 1871.

MY DEAR MR. HAYNE: Your letter is received, and I thank you very heartily for the frankness with which you speak therein. I shall remember your prescription, if the means I 'm about to try should fail. Truly, it is a somewhat desperate alternative; but desperate emer-

gencies always present such, and I am not one of those who would shirk the situation, and die dilly dallying.

Your treatment of the Macrobian Bow is vigorous, and full of dramatic *verve*. 'T is a fearful tale, beautifully told: like a terrible narrative issuing from the red lips of a dainty woman. The utter coolness of the cruelty is brought out with great clearness; and the stroke of pain goes to the heart of a reader, straight as Cambyses' arrow to the heart of the page. The accessories, too, — of the "hot wan morning," the slumbering wave, the stirless tree — all these give a kind of heartlessness of atmosphere to the whole scene that frames it perfectly.

I find nothing to suggest, to help the piece; and have made only a few small verbal and *punctuational* corrections.

I will be obliged if you will forward the letters of introduction to me, "Care of Winslow and Lanier, 29 Pine St., New York," as I shall probably leave before they could reach me here.

It gives me great encouragement that you think I might succeed in the literary life: — for I take it that you are in earnest in saying so, believing that you love Art with too genuine affection to trifle with her by bringing to her service, through mere politeness, an unworthy worker.

I enclose your MS. Where will you print the piece? Let me know, so that I may see it when published.

If I can do anything of service to you in the way of *small* corrections of MS. (at which I 'm said to be very keen-eyed — small hunter for small game, you know) do not hesitate to call on me.

Your Friend, SIDNEY LANIER.

MARIETTA, GA., *May* 26, 1873.

MY DEAR MR. HAYNE: The gracious odor of your "violets" has reached into my soul, and I have been loth to send them back to you. Stanza No. III. is unalloyedly delicious; and the closing line, —

"Breathing of heart-break and sad death of love," —

is simply ravishing. This sings itself over and over in my heart; and this: —

"Some with raised brows, and eyes of constancy
Fixed with fond meanings on a goal above."

What a tender music these two lines make! Are you, by the way, a musician? Strange, that I have never before asked this question, — when so much of my own life consists of music. I don't know that I've ever told you, that whatever turn I have for art, is purely musical; poetry being, with me, a mere tangent into which I shoot sometimes. I could play passably on several instruments before I could write legibly; and since then, the very deepest of my life has been filled with music, which I have studied and cultivated far more than poetry. I only mention this in order that you may understand the delight your poetry gives me. It is so rarely *musical*, so melodiously pure and silvery in flow: it occupies in poetry the place of Mendelssohn in music, or of Franz Abt or of Schubert. It is, in this respect, simply unique in modern poetry: William Morris comes nearest to it, but Morris lives too closely within hearing of Tennyson to write unbroken music: for Tennyson (let me not blaspheme against the Gods!) is not a musical, tho' in other respects (particularly in that of phrase-making) a very wonderful writer.

While at Alleghany Springs last summer, I loaned to Miss J—— F——, of Augusta, my copy of your "Legends and Lyrics" on condition she should return it. I 've written her since about it; but my letter probably failed to reach her, as I knew not her address save that she lived in Augusta. Having a copy from you, I did n't want to lose it; and if you have another by you, I would be glad if you would straightway write your name therein and mail to me.

I do not know the man Williams, you mention. I have been greatly amused at some strictures[1] upon you made by certain Knights of Mrs. W——, in condign punishment for your critique on Mrs. W.'s book. I have not read that production; but from all I can hear 't is a most villainous poor pitiful piece of work; and, so far from endeavoring to serve the South by blindly plastering it with absurd praises, I think all true patriots ought to unite in redeeming the land from the imputation that such books are regarded as casting honor upon the section. God forbid we should really be brought so low as that we must perforce brag of such works as "Clifford Troupe" and "Heart Hungry": and God be merciful to that man (he is an Atlanta editor) who boasted that sixteen thousand of these books had been sold in the South! This last damning fact (if it be a fact, — and I should not wonder) ought to have been concealed at the risk of life, limb and fortune.

I 'm glad to hear you 're going to travel; but you are starting too soon. I hope to get to New York City about the 1st of July. If you should be there any time between that and the middle of October, let me know,

[1] A great smudge of ink here is encircled and labelled: "Done after all was written. Can't write it over now!"

by a note addressed to me care of "Winslow, Lanier & Co., 27 Pine St., N. Y.," — an address which will always reach me.

I return your "Violets": and I hope that when you go to Heaven you 'll be wafted there on the sighs of just such another bunch! Your Friend,

SIDNEY LANIER.

MACON, GA., *May* 23, 1874.

MY DEAR MR. HAYNE: Your letter gave me sincere pleasure; and I would have sent you some expression of my gratification at hearing from you by a much earlier mail than this, had it not been for my Arabian eccentricities and unreliablenesses of movements, which have kept me on the wing for a month past. I am now in Macon, and shall remain here for three or four weeks, — then Northward again. I am truly rejoiced to see, by occasional evidences in the magazines that you are again active in that delicious business of Creation.

My brother has just sent me your "Cloud-Star" which he has clipped from some paper. I am charmed with it, and am not sure but I shall come presently to think it the strongest thing you have done. To die, consumed by these heavenly fires: — that is infinitely better than to live the tepid lives and love the tepid loves that belong to the lower planes of activity; and I would rather fail at some things I wot of, than succeed at some others. Is not that the secret that lies hid in the bosom of this rose of a poem?

Pray send me immediately the long poem you speak of. I shall take the greatest pleasure in looking it over, and if I find anything in the way of flaws will yell it out to you. Nothing in the world like little niggers and

idiots, for finding things, don't you know? Send the poem to me at Macon.

The review of your "Legends and Lyrics" was sent to Lippincott's, and declined. I afterwards mentioned to Browne that I had written it (tho' I did not offer it to him in terms): who told me that a review of the book had already appeared in the "Southern Mag." So my piece lies bleeding, and I don't know what to do with it.[1] Tell me what you are doing.

In answer to your kind inquiries as to myself: I spent the winter in Baltimore, pursuing music and meditating my "Jacquerie." I was *Flauto Primo* of the Peabody Symphony Orchestra, and God only could express the delight and exultation with which I helped to perform the great works brought out by that organization during the winter. Of course this was a queer place for me: aside from the complete *bouleversement* of going from the Court-House to the footlights. I was a raw player and a provincial withal, without practice, and guiltless of instruction — for I never had a teacher. To go, under these circumstances, among old professional musicians, and assume a leading part in a large Orchestra which was organized expressly to play the most difficult works of the great masters — was (now that it 's all over) a piece of temerity that I do not remember ever to have equalled before. But I trusted in Love, pure and simple; and was not disappointed, for, as if by miracle, difficulties and discouragements melted away before the fire of a passion for music which grows ever stronger within my heart — and I came out with results more gratifying than it is becoming in me to specify. 'T is quite settled that

[1] It did finally appear in the "Southern Magazine;" see the volume "Music and Poetry."

I cannot practise law: either writing or speaking appears to produce small hæmorrhages which completely sap my strength; and I am going in a few weeks to New York, — without knowing what on earth I am to do there — armed only with a silver Boehm flute, and some dozen of steel pens.

Happy man, — you who have your cabin in among the hills and trees, you who can sit still and work at Home, — pray a short prayer once in a while for one as homeless as the ghost of Judas Iscariot.

Write me straightway: and write, as to one who is always Your faithful friend,

SIDNEY LANIER.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., *October* 16, 1875.

MY DEAR MR. HAYNE: Your note — which has followed me about and finally reached me here — gave me a great deal of pleasure, and I hasten to assure you that I have for months only been putting off from day to day the actual committal to paper of the letter which has been lying really written within me. This "putting off" has been due, not to laziness, but to its opposite. I believe I wrote you sometime ago that I had been employed to make a book on Florida. I commenced the travels preparatory thereto in April last: the thing immediately began to ramify and expand, until I quickly found I was in for a long and very difficult job: so long, and so difficult, that, after working day and night for the last three months on the materials I had previously collected, I have just finished the book, and am now up to my ears in proof-sheets and wood-cuts which the publishers are rushing through in order to publish at the earliest possible moment, the book having several fea-

tures designed to meet the wants of the winter-visitors to Florida. It is in truth only a kind of spiritualized guide-book.

This it is which has prevented me from writing you. With a nervous employer and a pushing publisher behind me, I have had to work from ten to fourteen hours a day; and the confinement to the desk brought on my old hæmorrhages about a month ago which quite threatened for a time to suspend my work forever on *this* side of [the] River.

I 'm thus minute in detailing the reasons for my failure to write you, because all along through these last three or four months when gratifying things have been happening to me in connection with my little artistic efforts, I have had constantly in mind the kindly help and encouragement which your cheering words used to bring me when I was even more obscure than I am now. Even in my insignificant experience I have seen so much of the hue-and-cry sort of criticism — that which waits until it finds how the big-mouth'd dogs are running and then squeaks in chorus without the least knowledge of, or regard for, the game or the course of the hunt — that I have learned to set a high value on genuine and independent judgments. These you gave me, and I will always be grateful to you for them.

I fully expected to go to Aiken, and to have sight of you, there; but the devious current of work bore me to New York, and although I had to run back to Charleston for two days, about a month after I wrote you, I was never able to get to Aiken. I met Dutcher and Randall in Augusta, but had only one uncertain day there, and they agreed it was impossible to get hold of you in the limited time I had.

Now, then, let me know upon what you are engaged, and how you are faring. I have not yet had a moment to look into your last volume — a pleasure I 've been promising myself as soon as these dreadful proof-sheets are finished.

Write me "Care of Gibson Peacock, Esq., 1425 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa."

I will be glad to hear from you, and of you: being always

Sincerely yours,

SIDNEY LANIER.

During the next six years I heard from Lanier at longer and longer intervals. As time advanced, his responsibilities seemed to increase, *pari passu*, with his growing reputation. No man ever had a loftier artistic conscience. I am disposed to believe that between the necessities of his position as a poor man, which forced him often into hasty, uncongenial work, and his keen instincts and high standards of artistic excellence, he suffered a species of torture. At all events, in the notes I received from him during the period specified, his tone alternated between a certain feverish exaltation and a profound despondency. Never have I known him to complain — to "wear his saddened heart" ostentatiously "upon his sleeve;" but I could read between the lines even of his (apparently) more cheerful communications, and detect the slow, half-muffled throb of heart-break there! He struggled bravely on, long after he could not but have felt that the shadow, for weary years darkening over him, had taken at last the hues of death — that the fatal weapon long suspended above his head was about to fall.

The letter which follows was the last of any length I ever received from him: —

435 N. Calvert St., Baltimore, Md.,
November 19, 1880.

My dear Mr. Hayne: I have been wishing to write you a long time, and have thought several letters to you. But I could never tell you the extremity of illness, of poverty, and of unceasing work, in which I have spent the last three years; and you would need only once to see the weariness with which I crawl to bed after a long day's work — and often a long night's work at the heel of it, — and Sundays just as well as other days, — in order to find in your heart a full warrant for my silence. It seems incredible that I have printed such an unchristian quantity of matter, — all, too, tolerably successful, — and earned so little money; and the wife and the four boys — who are so lovely that I would not think a palace good enough for them if I had it — make one's earnings seem all the less.

This leads me to think of your fervent ascription of praise in the October "Scribner's" which several of my friends admire with me. I will get the November "Harper's" — to which your note alludes — and read your poem there. A couple of songs by you, which I read in a news-store a short time ago while rapidly turning over the leaves of "The South Atlantic," gave me much pleasure. I fancy that I perceive a *clarified* quality in your later verse which shows a distinct growth in you. The plane of art seems higher and quieter, and the air purer.

I send you by this mail a copy of my *Boy's King Arthur*, which the publishers have brought out in sumptuous style as a companion-book to my *Boy's Froissart* which was so successful last year. I hope you will like the Introduction: as for the matter, — it is old Sir

Thomas Malory's, and I doubt not you already know him well for one of the sweetest, cunningest, simplest, and skillfullest writers of English, as well as story-tellers, that ever lived. I 'm greatly interested in the sale of this book: not directly, for being in narrow straits I sold the copyright for cash several months ago; but because the price of another book I 've just sent on, to continue the series with, next Christmas, depends on it.

For six months past a ghastly fever has been taking possession of me each day at about twelve M., and holding my head under the surface of indescribable distress for the next twenty hours, subsiding only enough each morning to let me get on my working-harness, but never intermitting. A number of tests show it not to be the "hectic" so well known in consumption; and to this day it has baffled all the skill I could find in New York, in Philadelphia, and here. I have myself been disposed to think it arose purely from the bitterness of having to spend my time in making academic lectures and boy's books — pot-boilers all — when a thousand songs are singing in my heart that will certainly kill me if I do not utter them soon. But I don't think this diagnosis has found favor with any practical physician; and meantime I work day after day in such suffering as is piteous to see.

— I hope all this does not read like a Jeremiad: I mention these matters only in the strong rebellion against what I fear might be your thought — namely, forgetfulness of you — if you did not know the causes which keep me from sending you more frequent messages. I do not, and will not, forget the early encouragements which used to come from you when I was just daring to think of making verses.

I am glad to see, from your letter, that your illness abates. I protest against your sick terrapin, floating down a muddy current, and substitute a soul sweeping down a stream bank'd with marvels, whose duty is to keep all eyes open, and report, in poems, from time to time.

Please thank Mrs. Hayne for her card, and believe me always

Sincerely yours,

SIDNEY LANIER.

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